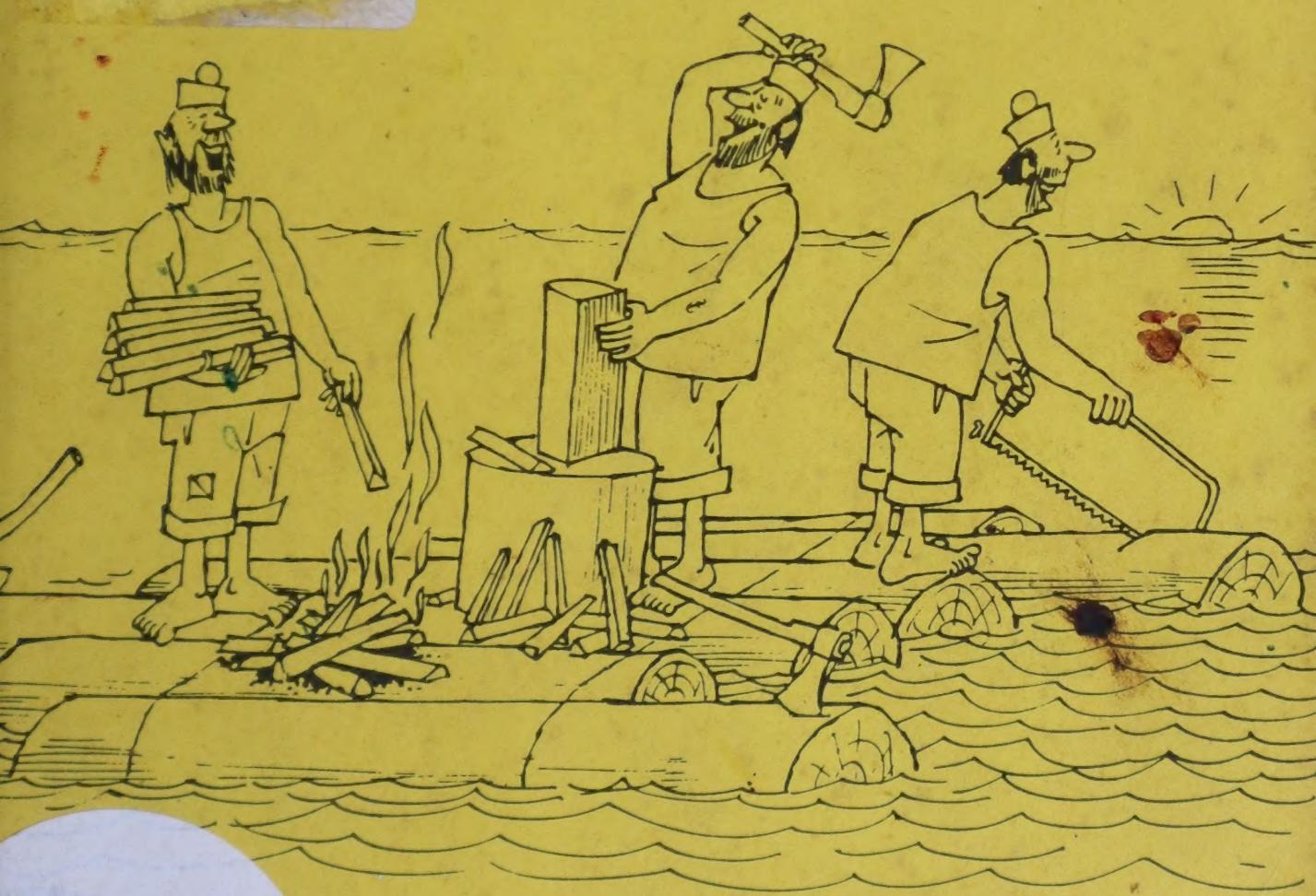


# ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT



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N91

EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Number 37

DVV



# ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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is a half-yearly journal for adult education. In 1973, the journal was intended by the (DVV) to help keep in touch with past partners and to support the work of projects about dialogue and the exchange of information between Africa, Asia and Latin America, both among industrialised nations. It is intended to discuss and developments in the theory and practice. The group consists of adult educators working in organization or administration. Increasing education, agriculture, vocational training has been included, as their tasks are clearly a concern of educators at higher and top levels, academics both in Africa, Asia and Latin America. We herewith invite adult educators from the journal. Articles should bear a considerable education and development can be treated in its widest sense. We kindly ask you to use footnotes should be used as sparingly as possible. Responsible for contents are the authors. the opinion of the German Adult Education

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## Editorial

INSA/India  
No. 2, Benson Cross |  
Benson Town  
Bangalore 560 025/6  
South India

The 1980's are often characterised as lost years in development for the majority of countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This not only with respect to a deepening of the environmental crisis. Several authors in this issue justifiably pass on the reminder that environment and development are inseparable issues. Present trends in national and international economic markets show an unrelenting attack on natural resources. The sad interim balance: never has so much tropical forest been destroyed on an international scale despite increased knowledge and solemn promises! Debt signifies for many countries today a larger movement of capital from the South to the North than vice versa as far as financial assistance for development cooperation is concerned. The Gulf War, too, which kept the world in suspense at the beginning of the year, is now casting a shadow, probably for future generations to come. The full extent of environmental damage caused by the war can hardly be assessed and certainly cannot be rectified in its entirety in the foreseeable future. This has its own financial dimensions.

These few remarks may help to make it clear that a development and environment oriented adult education has not lost in significance in the last few years — on the contrary, one can rightly assume that it has gained in significance. Adult education institutions will have to adjust to this situation and at the same time learn to come to grips with these new and broadened tasks.

This issue of our journal concentrates on the theme environment and development at a time when preparations for the world conference of the United Nations in Rio in 1992 are in full swing. Not only will national governments and delegations be represented here but parallel hereto a forum for local, national, regional and in-

ternational non-government organisations involved in this area of work will take place.

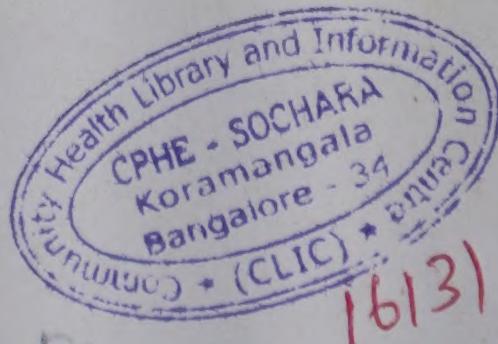
We have realized in our work that there is a wealth of material on the environment and development link but that in contrast to this there is a scarcity of material on adult education, its practical experiences and conceptual considerations, related hereto. We are still pleased to have received several articles on this however which we can present to our readers. At the same time we wish to publicise the fact that we would like to continue the dialogue on a development and environment oriented adult education in future issues. This is, so to say, an invitation to adult educators.

We are pleased to be able to present articles from Laos and Vietnam for the first time and to continue the exchange on experiences in literacy work.

Here another pointer: Issue no. 37 of our journal is accompanied by the second supplement in English. It focuses on educational provisions and needs in the informal sector; it comprises numerous case studies and conceptual considerations related hereto of adult educators who have worked on a research project of the University of Sierra Leone over a longer period. As we consider the results to be not only important and interesting in Sierra Leone, we have supported their publication and distribution for international adult education cooperation. The subscribers of the English issue will automatically receive the supplement; it can however be ordered from us by interested readers of the French and Spanish issues. Yet another pointer here: not only our colleagues in Sierra Leone but we, too, are interested, in future, in comments on and experience in adult education in the informal sector.

**Heribert Hinzen**

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*There are numerous ways of integrating the environment as a natural and increasingly problematic part of our life in educational work. John Field provides an outline here in his attempt to link conceptual considerations with practical trials and experience. John Field is Director of the Continuing Education Research Centre, University of Warwick, Coventry 7AL, England.*

**John Field**

## **Towards a greener adult education**

Most peoples and nations recognise that protecting the quality of the environment is the single most important challenge facing human society today. Humanity's destruction of the planet, especially in the post-industrial nations, is shameful. Though a cleaner and healthier natural environment will not itself reduce poverty, disease, famine or injustice, it is certain that none of these things can be achieved without it. In one public gathering after another, political leaders of all shades have voiced their environmental concern. And if some of these leaders were yesterday denouncing Greens as doom-laden eccentric buffoons, their about-turn should make us think as well as laugh. There can be no

doubting the seriousness of the threat, nor the scale of the task now facing humanity.

In rising to the challenge, education and training have a very important contribution to make. That contribution can take place at a number of levels. Most obvious, there is the task of teaching **about** the environment and its present vulnerability: of passing on the skills and knowledge needed if we are to take care of the natural world. Similarly, we can carry out our adult education **for** the environment, helping people gain the competences and knowledge needed to take action. And we can educate ourselves and others **through** the environment, learning about the natural world through a direct engagement with it. These are all important tasks, and we should explore them a little further.

## Information and skills

At the simplest level, education about the environment involves the simple transmission of information. Of course, we adult educators are suspicious about the idea of education as factual transmission: it sounds too much like what Freire called the »banking« process! But we shouldn't be too quick to dismiss the value of access to information, even when it is very limited in its nature. Let me take an example: who, apart from a handful of specialists, had even heard of the ozone layer a decade ago — let alone that it was being depleted, and that the results were harmful? If you just consider how much energy goes into **hiding** information from citizens, by governments and corporate institutions, then the potential value of access to information starts to become a little bit clearer. I remember myself working in an engineering factory where noone knew whether welding operations on certain types of metal were hazardous; our employer certainly wasn't going to tell us; simple information alone would not have been enough, but it would have been a start.

Much the same could be said about skills. Workers, managers, foresters and farmers will all need to acquire new skills if agriculture and industries are to function in more sustainable ways in the future. In some cases it may be that we will have to relearn old skills, of course. And with rapid change in industry, agriculture and all other sectors of economic activity, it is unlikely that initial skills training will suffice.

Knowledge and skills, though, are only part of the task before us. Just as important is the need to enable people to acquire the competences and understanding needed for positive action, so that they can not only respond to immediate demands but can look ahead and take the initiative for change. What those skills and competences might be is something that will vary from one place to another, and from one context to another. Environmental adult education is as many-sided as the range of activities needed for environmental protection.

At one level, there is again a need for information and competences that are fairly simple, but without which action will be largely misdirected. An example might be the question of population growth: are we right to see this in a clear cut way, either as a terrible threat to natural resources, or as simply one relatively minor change which will be balanced by other and natural processes of adjustment? Any discussion of this question should be informed by knowledge not only of relative rates of demographic growth and decline and the merits of contraception and family limitation; but also by information about which kinds of society consume most non-renewable resources, which create most non-degradable waste, which contribute most to ozone depletion and global warming. Such meaningful information needs are ubiquitous and ever more important in a world where trivial information is everywhere, and the ability to manipulate information is a significant source of financial and political and military power.

There is also a need for a new approach to what is conventionally called political education. It is not simply a matter of placing our knowledge of political power structures at the disposal of environmentally concerned citizens, nor offering courses which consider Green parties and their policies. The Irish adult educator Tom Inglis has suggested the extent of human power is now so great that we have to go beyond Freire's theory of education as a force for political and economic transformation; he suggests that we need: a socio-ecological perspective of adult learning and education specifically in relation to the domination of other species and mastering and controlling the environment as a means of continued economic growth.

This may, he believes, involve people — especially in the affluent nations — learning »to depower rather than empower themselves« (Inglis 1991: 173).

In practical terms, learning how to campaign and lobby in different political systems requires appropriate organisational skills and ecological understandings. Contexts, and thus the skills, will vary — think of such examples as protecting seals in southern Wales, coping with poisonous waste in eastern Poland, and protecting the rainforests from loggers in Brazil. Planning and providing a new system of vocational qualifications which attend to environmental needs, and then delivering the training which leads to the qualifications, requires yet another set of competences. Vocational education differs in turn, though it can obviously overlap with, learning about countryside conservation and recreation. It is important to recognise the need for variety and diversity, and to ensure that education is always appropriate to the type of activities, the local socio-political context and the particularities of the local environment. There are no ready-made »recipes« for success, no easy check-lists, which can be exported from one setting to another.

## Education through the environment

Then there is education through the environment. We know very well that much good adult learning is informal, incidental and even more or less unplanned. When I ask myself how I first became interested in the environment at a global level, I am carried back to when my daughter was a baby, and I used to carry her on my back over the Pennine hills; that's where I learned to love and respect the natural world; it is also where I first heard of the greenhouse effect, listening to a group of climbers arguing in a cafe over their plates of egg and chips. For me, then, learning came from a leisure activity. For others, it will be through their work (falling crop yields), their community (bad news about a waste tip), or their family or friends. The point is that people learn far more informally than they do formally; and they learn greatest where the learning is bound up with their sense of whom they themselves are.

How can adult educators apply this to learning about the environment? One way is to organise more learning in settings from which you can learn. Study tours and guided visits or walks are obvious examples, and there are always sites close to hand. When a group of us in Coventry sat and brainstormed about the possibilities, we found over fifty places that we could visit easily in our own locality; they included an organic gardening centre, archaeological digs, an alternative farm, the canal society, recycling centres, a power station, and the local slaughterhouse; eventually we even managed to think of the gardens right outside my office window, and went and studied them for an hour! A more ambitious form of learning in and through the environment is the work camp, where a group of people make a practical contribution to conservation; in many countries there are conservation groups who specialise in organising work camps for volunteers. In Europe, you can learn about sustainable farming by working for a week or two on an organic farm.

If you think about it for a moment, though, going out to learn is not the only option. You can't expect to organise environmental adult education from an ecologically irresponsible centre. This is the only place where checklists have much value, and it can be a useful learning exercise to try and construct your own. There are the obvious things (energy, materials, recycling facilities, transport); but also the less obvious (when we did a similar environmental audit once, I was rather dismayed and even disgusted to find that my office furniture apparently gave off carcinogens).

## Participation and learning

So much for the environmental curriculum. Adult education systems, though, are also organised institutionally, not always in ways that are compatible with the goals and values of environmental stewardship. The first requirement of environmental adult education institutions is that they be accessible, user-friendly and learner-centred. Very few adult educators would disagree with this view, of course, but it is worth emphasising the thinking that lies behind it: the point about caring for the environment is that it needs the **active** participation of the entire spectrum of society rather than their passive acquiescence and acceptance of others' decision-making on their behalf; active and participatory forms of learning are required, which respect the learner, and are open to all and not solely the few.

Second, environmental adult education needs itself to be organised on the basis of sustainability. This may demand something of a self-denying ordinance in a world which equates size and success; but it is not necessary to be big and wasteful in order to be best. Rather than investing in new buildings, and asking people to travel to them, we need to consider whether we could make better use of distance and open learning resources? Again, this is highly congruent with the values which most adult educators already hold.

We may need to defend the sustainable organisation of our offer, though, as against those who favour centralisation of delivery and decision-making.

So far I have dealt with the safer and less controversial forms of environmental adult education. All of the above is directed mainly at relatively minor changes or additions to existing practice; it indicates what the professional adult educator could do without too much effort, and in most cases without risking either their careers or (in some countries) their skins. These are all important steps to take, and more of us should try to give them our attention. But I do not believe that they go nearly far enough to meet the sheer scale of the challenge to our common natural inheritance.

The dilemma, for some of us, is this: our planet is in a sorry state, yet we seem to be trying to cure the sickness by using the very same methods that created the problems in the first place. To be more specific, it looks as though the major environmental problems — ozone depletion, resource exhaustion and the greenhouse effect — have arisen through the blind pursuit of economic growth at all costs, fuelled primarily by rapidly rising consumer expectations and driven by unquestioning faith in science and technology. Are we, then, to turn to those same acquisitive values and instrumental sciences to solve the problems which afflict our planet? It does seem rather contradictory.

Clearly, then, we need to broaden our concerns if we wish to »learn a way out« of the vicious circle of rising consumption, growing production, and worsening planetary degradation. We do not have to accept that our science and values and lifestyles are all wrong. I suggest simply that they have, in part at least, contributed to the creation of the most serious problem that humanity has faced. Not to pose questions about their status and function would be to prefer partial blindness to a full and honest view. But what are the implications for adult learning and education?

## Learning society

Here we face the complex challenge of creating a learning society. By that, I mean one which is capable of collective learning that encompasses new ways of living together as a community. This essay is written from a decaying industrial city in a northern European nation, where you can visibly watch the mounting problems of over-reliance upon market forces as a means of regulating collective behaviour and deciding how to allocate resources. But it isn't simply that society is damaged when we treat people as insular units, competing aggressively within the market place; that is a symptom more than an underlying cause. The process of individuation — that is, awareness of oneself as distinctive and possessing a unique identity, with unique and powerful needs — has gone a long way in Britain, as it has in all the industrial nations. How, as a society, can we learn a new and desirable **common** future, where we share certain goals and values, in a way which is congruent with rather than imposed on our powerful, and probably ineradicable, sense of individual identity and self-hood?

Tackling the degradation of our environment is both the greatest source of fear and of hope in our contemporary world. Environmental movements have provided us with some of the most optimistic and forward-looking images of our time: for example, the image of a blue and green planet, circling through space, to be found on the posters and leaflets of so many environmental organisations. Yet it is at the same time the fear of annihilation that has prompted a search for new ways of living that are sustainable and are compatible with other and valued life forms, and that has led to the discovery — or is it rediscovery — of a common identity which can embrace animal and plant life as well as humanity.

That returns us to the more practical matters of adult education and learning. To learn our way out, we need to be able to imagine and try out different ways of living, new forms of social as well as

economic organisation. We also need to examine our values and our dominant forms of scientific knowledge. It is probable that those kinds of learning will take place outside the system of government-sponsored adult formal education, and will occur largely within the broader domain of social movements of various kinds. These social movements are able to construct a kind of »free space« where identities, values and relationships can be explored, developed, tested and practiced.

Is there any evidence that this is happening? I think there is, though my own experience is confined to my small northern European island. Here, we find that public participation in almost all kinds of associational life is declining, almost by the day, including trade unions, the major women's organisations, cooperative societies, and the workers' educational association; most kinds of political activity are becoming almost entirely professionalised. The exception? It is the environmentalist movement; even allowing for a little double counting, in Britain the national environmental groups now have more members than the trade union movement. In terms of size alone, then, there are some grounds for hope.

## **Learning movements**

As learning movements, too, the environmentalist organisations have had an extraordinary impact. Again, my examples come locally, from our research project on »Active Citizenship«. The research concerns a number of different kinds of voluntary activity, and the people we have interviewed include local Greenpeace supporters. The first finding to stress is that an enormous amount of learning and education goes on inside all the organisations that we have been studying; this is so even of the Greenpeace support groups, who keep trying to persuade us that we would find out more if we studied Friends of the Earth who, unlike Greenpeace, have a formal education programme. The second finding that I want to men-

tion is that, so far as we can tell, people involved in the environmentalist groups are far more effective at managing their own learning, and making lateral connections away from their immediate focus (on whaling, say, or nuclear waste dumping), than members of quite a few other groups who do have formal education programmes (an example might be the coordinators of local Neighbourhood Watch groups). And so far as we can tell, the same seems to be true of other environmental groups.

Can we conclude anything from these findings? Well, the fact that people don't see their self-directed or incidental learning as »education« doesn't mean either that they aren't learning a lot, nor that they don't value that learning and see its relevance. However, it's harder to explain why so much self-directed and incidental learning goes on in and around the environmentalist movement. It may just be that most environmentalists tend to be well-educated already (that's true of our own sample), and so it's easy for them to carry on learning on their own. But that begs the question of why it is that people who are evidently successful formal learners tend to get involved in environmental groups, where they then proceed to manage their own learning very successfully. The important thing seems to be that these groups tend to generate an organisational culture where learning is valued and taken seriously, and is then applied in campaigns or in leisure activities.

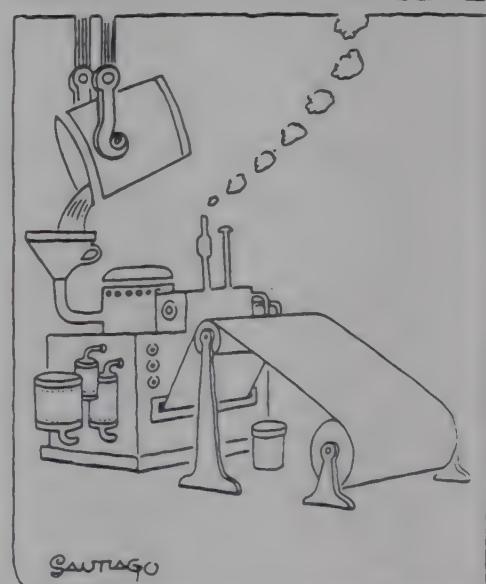
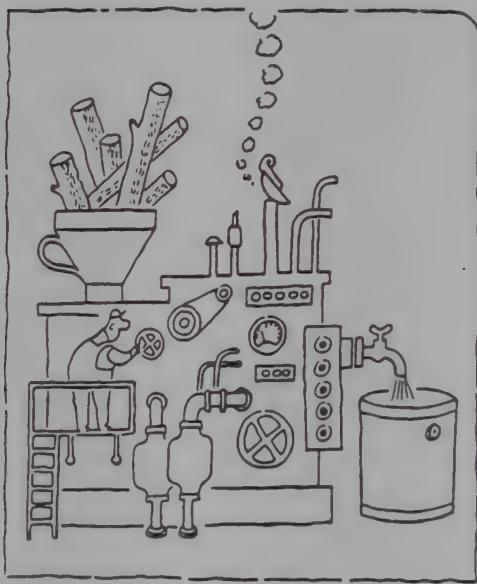
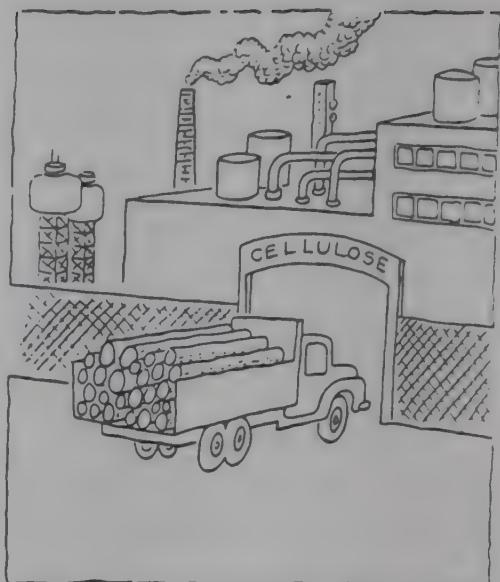
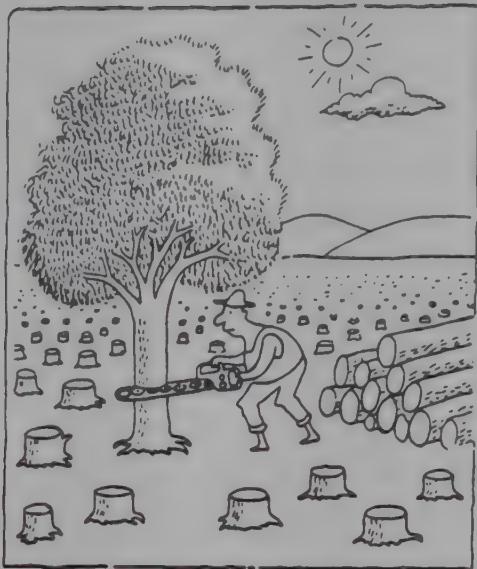
Could adult educators leave the business of learning a way out to the environmentalist movement? My own professional interests lie in saying »no« in answer to this question, though as a researcher I don't feel able to offer an answer, for the time being at least. Unlike Germany, it is significant to note that in the British context we found little or no evidence of formal connections between adult education and the environmental movement (cf Payne 1991), but when we ask environmental activists why this is, they immediately want to know how they could influence the adult education system. So there may be a place for the adult educator after all, though it is unlikely in my

view that the formal public adult education system will foster the deep learning — which we sometimes describe in terms like »perspective transformation« or »paradigm shift« — which is required if we are to invent new ways of living. However, perhaps I am taking too narrow a view. The experience of some colleagues who have developed a very successful University Certificate, combining a feminist perspective with environmental science, may yet cause me to change my own paradigm!

With that important qualification, there remains an important agenda for adult educators. In immediate practical terms, we can foster opportunities for learning about, for and in the environment; that is in itself a major task. So is the challenge of organising our institutions and offerings along learner-centred and sustainable lines. More ambitiously, we can offer support to those who are exploring new ways of living that are sustainable and compatible with the rest of nature, though the extent to which we can credibly claim to be doing more than sharing in the learning process is probably very small. What is very clear to me at least is that, in the field of environmental adult education, the creation of a culture of learning through and across different societies means not just more adult education; but a different approach to the support of learning.

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# **PROTECTING TROPICAL FORESTS — A CHALLENGE TO EDUCATION. WWF Project Environmental Education**

*Information work is, along with practical environmental conservation and protection manners, a central feature of the diverse activities of the World Life Fund in numerous countries of the world. Educational work also plays an important role for the WWF. The WWF-Project Environmental Education, Ecology Station, Bremen, Am Goethpol 9, 2800 Bremen 70, Germany, carried out, together with the Environment Foundation WWF Germany, an international seminar on the protection of tropical forests and its challenge to education. A conference report has been compiled hereto. The following chapters have been taken from this report.*

**Josef H. Reicholt**

## **The destruction of the tropical forest — A global challenge**

Tropical rain forests once covered an area of about 15 million square kilometres. Nearly half that amount has been destroyed during the past 40 years. Why should that concern us? What does that have to do with people in temperate zones?

Those are justified questions. More than 1000 years ago in Central Europe, or a good 200 years ago in North America, when woodland was being cleared to make farmland or pastures, no one was particularly sensitive about how forests were treated. Virgin forest practically does not exist here anymore. Forests have given way to

forestry. Are not the countries of the tropical belt then just as entitled to do likewise with their forests, and use them as the basis for economic and cultural development?

Three important reasons intimately linked to the nature of tropical rain forests speak against treating them in the same manner as forests in non-tropical regions.

The first reason is their *wealth of species*. Tropical rain forests contain the vast majority of the world's species of flora and fauna. The most recent estimates assume that more than 90 per cent of all the earth's species live in tropical forests. Species are not renewable resources. Once they become extinct, no power in the world, no effort, regardless how great, can bring them back. Ongoing destruction of tropical forests means the loss of species on a scale hardly yet imaginable.

The preservation of »genetic resources«, i.e. the genetic wealth accumulated in the variety of species, must be given top priority in our efforts to maintain living conditions on our earth.

The second reason is connected with the *tropical forest floor*. Barring a few exceptions and relatively restricted areas of geologically speaking young soils composed of volcanic matter and rich in nutrients, the soils of rain forests are virtually depleted. Over the course of millions of years they have become so weathered and leached that they no longer contain mineral nutrients required for agricultural plants to grow and thrive. Further there is a lack of clay minerals that bind applied fertilizers long enough for root absorption to take place.

This observation appears to be in diametrical opposition to the fact that tropical rain forests are brimming over with lush growth. The 1000 tons or more of trees and other plants flourishing on each hectare, however, are not necessarily an indication of fertile soil. It

is rather the nature of the rain forest which gives rise to an illusion of fertility. The forest takes the nutriments it requires from the air. Thanks to a close alliance with root fungi, the trees are capable of holding mineral nutrients in a virtually tight cycle of growth and decay. The minimal losses which nevertheless do occur are collected up by the forest like a gigantic sponge from the rains which year after year fall in great abundance, rains without which the tropical forests could not flourish. This leads to the third reason.

Climate plays an exceptionally important role for the conservation of rain forests in the tropics. Vice versa, the destruction of rain forests has world-wide repercussions on the climate. Tropical rain forests need from 1800 to 2000 millimetres of precipitation annually to thrive. Discounting rain forests along the coast and on islands, the »great water cycle« leading from the ocean to the mainland supplies only a more or less minor portion thereof.

In the Amazons, for example, the forest generates 50 to 75% of its own rainfall in the so-called »small cycle«, which only functions in large enough forest areas. Increased deforestation will reduce the amount of rainfall past the crucial point as additional water will not be supplied by the ocean. Consequently, without the scant two metres of water it requires, the remaining rain forest will also collapse.

The amount of carbon dioxide in the air will increase in proportion to the extent clear-cutting takes place since the plants replacing the forests, where they succeed at all, will make up only a fraction of the lush original forest growth. The remaining amount will enter the air as  $\text{CO}_2$ , increasing the greenhouse effect.

In addition, cattle grazing on the fields cleared from the forest, plus the termites at work there release tremendous amounts of the gas methane which also goes to increase the greenhouse effect. Destruction of the tropical rain forest is a contributing factor for the

emission of almost half of the surplus trace gasses causing temperatures to rise. The greenhouse effect will have consequences on a world-wide scale.

Lastly, it must be stressed that we ourselves, the people of the industrial countries, are largely responsible for triggering and pursuing the destruction of rain forests. By marketing rare timber from hitherto untouched rain forests, and by providing assistance for the development of rain forest areas, we become direct or indirect agents for a considerable part of the damage. It is not mere chance that 30 to 40 years ago the greatest part of virgin rain forests were still untouched, although the regions concerned have been populated for hundreds or thousands of years.

Ignorance on the part of the peoples of the tropics is by no means the explanation. On the contrary, from the start they knew how to treat the forest and what they could take from it. They needed neither our technology nor our money to live with and from the forest. Where the forests grow on poor soil, they remained untouched.

The Incas provide a prime example of this. They developed their advanced culture in the cold Andean highlands, and not in the warm, wet Amazon regions. The mineral content of the soil in the higher elevations dependably yielded sufficient crops in spite of the cold climate. The moist tropical lowlands offered no long-term prospect of harvest. There small groups of people wandered around as hunters and gatherers, never forming settlements so large as to endanger the balance of the forest.

The situation was quite different in Java, Bali or in other areas of Southeast Asia, where the ecologically young soils formed by volcanic activity are very rich in minerals. Long before the advent of Europeans, former tracts of rain-forest there had been, and are still being cultivated to yield rich harvests.

We will have to learn from the experience of those peoples if tropical forests are to be effectively tapped and simultaneously sustained. Enough mistakes have been made by transferring our idea of agriculture to the wet tropics.

## **WWF policy on cooperation with developing countries**

The standard of living for persons in developing countries can only be secured and improved if we succeed in eliminating the flagrant discrepancies existing in the levels of prosperity between North and South, and in overcoming the extremes of overproduction and waste of resources here, and the growing debt and misery there.

Trade policies of industrialized countries over the decades have led the countries of the »third world« into growing dependency, forcing them to export raw materials, mineral resources, agricultural commodities and forest products in order to acquire foreign currency. This led to disastrous over-exploitation of natural resources which was determined predominantly by the interests of the industrialized countries and financed by foreign debt.

This created a vicious circle of debt, inappropriate development, environmental destruction, shrinking productivity, poverty and new debt. That vicious circle can only be broken if donor countries design their development policies to help the receiver countries achieve continuing and lasting development independently through productive but sustainable use of natural resources. The

wellbeing of the people and their environment must be the guideline for development aid.

Through numerous projects in developing countries, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) promotes conservation, restoration, and use of natural resources in a way that safeguards their capacity to regenerate, and preserves the genetic and biological diversity of their ecosystems. To WWF — in cooperation with governments and development institutions in donor and receiver countries — environmental protection for the people through lasting development constitutes one of the most important goals to be achieved by the year 2000.

## **Demands of WWF**

1. The debts of certain countries of the »Third World« should be converted into nature and environmental measures, e.g. through trade in debt instruments (debt-for-nature swaps) or remission of debt on the government level.
2. The course of international trade in tropical timber should be altered rapidly to comply with ecological considerations. Selective support should be given to projects focusing on the use of forests in harmony with nature and fostering comprehensive, ecologically appropriate reforestation measures. More intensive financial and human resources should be employed for corresponding measures initiated by the association of international organizations trading in tropical timber.
3. Development policies should be firmly based on the concept of »help for self-help« under criteria that are integrated and economically prudent, that sustain natural products, and satisfy the basic needs of the population, while ensuring environmental and social compatibility.

4. Development projects aiding wasteful exploitation of nature and inflicting damage to ecosystems must be halted or forestalled.
5. The Test for Environmental Compatibility, binding since 1988 on all German development assistance projects, must be consequently and strictly applied to all international measures, and development agencies, organizations and banks must be staffed accordingly by qualified ecologists, social scientists, anthropologists, agronomists, pedologists, and forest experts.
6. Criteria for environmental compatibility must be examined to determine feasibility thereof and compliance therewith, and, when necessary adjustments must be made to improve mechanisms of control.
7. Provision should be made for small-scale assistance measures adapted to the needs of rural populations and their local circumstances.
8. An internationally binding code should be developed providing for a timely examination of environmental implications inherent in plans drawn up by companies in donor countries to make investments or lend credit in developing countries.
9. Development assistance budgets should be generally increased for projects in nature and resource conservation.
10. The lines of cooperation and experience exchange with non-government organizations in donor and receiver countries should be improved, and non-government organizations should be given more say in development assistance planning and implementation.

## **World Wild Life International and its environmental education and information campaigns in countries with tropical forests. An overview**

The destruction of tropical forests can be traced back directly and indirectly to western industrialized countries — on the one hand. This includes the commercial industry and the clearing of forest for »cash crops«.

On the other hand, we find the inhabitants themselves involved in destruction of tropical forests. Over-population is one of the reasons, and no one can blame those people for seeking firewood, and food for themselves and their livestock in the forests.

The problems created by the destruction of tropical forests must be dealt with in industrialized countries and in the countries of the Third World alike. We must work to convince the western world to give up their luxury habits and stop exploiting the poor countries. On the other hand, we must help local groups in developing countries find alternatives to destruction.

Environmental education is an important instrument for long-term solutions to the problems, and I would like to tell you today about what is being done in the 28 national organizations of WWF and in projects of the Third World.

There is no one clear global definition for environmental education as it differs in industrialized nations and developing countries. As I understand it, the dissemination of information must be seen as a

method of awakening ecological consciousness, while education can be viewed as a method of closing the gaps between consciousness and behaviour.

Firstly, it is important to identify the target groups for environmental education. For WWF three target groups are particularly significant:

1. The **formal education system** consisting of primary and secondary schools, and universities.
2. **Non-government education** including youth groups, non-government organizations, churches and the media.
3. Education of the **rural population** in selected areas.

When a programme is launched, the government of the country in question is always consulted beforehand. It is one of our basic principles that the execution of such programmes remain in native hands.

I do not believe that there is one international environmental education programme or one environmental education method. I would like to acquaint you in greater detail with the principles and guidelines as well as with the philosophy of WWF with regard to its international environmental education work.

## **Guideline No. 1**

Programmes in environmental education should have national dimensions and should be developed and implemented by local experts.

An environmental education programme in Germany, for example, can only be drafted and carried out by German experts. This ex-

perience must likewise be respected for developing countries which still often suffer the consequences of their colonial heritage.

Over the past 15 years so many attempts to develop environmental education programmes have failed, to my mind mainly because the local population was ignored.

## **Guideline No. 2**

Environmental education programmes should refrain from preaching to groups of already converted persons. Fifteen per cent of the people in western countries are already convinced and motivated.

The temptation is great to develop materials and workshops for that category of people. All speak the same language, are open to new ideas and new suggestions, and hence the promise of success is very high.

It is much more difficult to work with non-adherents, but in all environmental education initiatives preference should be given precisely to that target group. For this reason it is necessary to cooperate with already existing educational systems. Efforts should be made to work mainly with members of the teenage generation who find MacDonalds, motorcycles and hard-rock music much more attractive than their own future.

The people of developing countries in general have a considerably higher degree of ecological consciousness than those in industrialized nations. This may seem paradoxical, but remember that inhabitants of developing countries are much more immediately dependent on their surroundings. For them, a safe and healthy world is vital in a direct sense.

## **Guideline No. 3**

Every environmental education programme should try to satisfy the direct personal interests of the persons in the target group.

The situation of teachers in Germany is very different from those in Sambia. In Germany teachers are well-paid, and therefore a main goal of many of them may be longer holidays. It is certainly also important for many to ease the burden of the daily teaching load through attractive pedagogical materials, continuing education programmes, new ideas from continuing education institutions. If an environmental education programme offers assistance in this area, it has a positive chance of succeeding.

In Sambia teachers receive little pay and are barely if at all able to sustain their families. Their primary interest in such a situation is monetary. To them the interests of German teachers are likely to be only secondary. For this reason, WWF's environmental education programme in Sambia employs and pays teachers to help in further education courses or to design teaching materials. It makes no sense to convince rural populations on the necessity of conservation measures without aiding them to improve their daily life.

In such regions, WWF environmental education programmes always try to lend direct support to those people. Help comes first, followed by trust, and only then is it feasible to expect behavioural changes.

## **Guideline No. 4**

Environmental education programmes should be developed together with and through already existing institutions. The establishment of new networks and organizations should be avoided. In industrialized nations today we find too many environmental

groups with the same tendency. Often they work just for themselves and only with persons already motivated. In rural areas, village or tribe structures are mandatory for the development of new concepts and ideas.

## Guideline No. 5

Evaluation should be an integral component of every environmental education programme. This aspect is neglected by many environmental educators who lose objectivity and tend to see their own »baby« as being very successful. What good is the best publication unless it is distributed or used? What use is an excellent course if it only reaches persons who are already convinced?

Our efforts are beginning to bear fruit and this seminar in Bremen is not the only evidence. Generally speaking, environmental education must increasingly become a vital part of the education of future generations.



## **Education for global tolerance and ecological responsibility — WWF policy on educational work in Germany**

The earth has become smaller and cultures have grown closer, despite all the differences. Environmental problems, too, have long since surpassed boundaries. The destruction of tropical forests and the changes in climate caused by the greenhouse effect concern all people. Everyone bears a share in the responsibility for his environment and the living conditions of future generations, particularly those of us who live in the rich industrialized nations which contribute substantially to the greenhouse effect through an over-supply of consumer products and energy waste.

Immediate political action and long-term environmental education must go hand in hand, the one, ultimately, being vain without the other.

We Germans must renounce our know-all attitude and our surrogate mentality. We no more possess patent recipes for ecology in the so-called Third World than we do in our own country. There is much that teachers and environmental educators can learn from educational approaches taken in other countries. An international exchange of experience profits all of us, and contributes to ensure peace with nature and peace among men.

Early in October 1990, Paulo Freire, Brazil's Education Minister, and propagator of »pedagogy of liberation«, stated in Cologne at the congress »North-South Conflict — An Education Task for the Future«, that tolerance in a global sense is fomented by arousing

curiosity in foreign cultures and different modes of living. Promoting tolerance and awakening ecological understanding and a disposition for ecological responsibility — these are the guidelines of WWF in its environmental education work in Germany.

An important focus in the work of WWF is development assistance in a South-North direction, from a pedagogical as well as a conservationist stand-point. The educational symposium »Teaching Paths through the Jungle«, which took place in Bremen, brought together experts from tropical forest countries and German professionals from the fields of education, cooperation for development assistance and nature conservation.

It became clear that environmental education in tropical forest countries and environmental education in industrialized nations each must follow a separate path. In the Third World priority must be given to the satisfaction of primary human needs before discussion can begin on conservation and environmental precautions. The extensive knowledge and experience which inhabitants of tropical forest regions have already accumulated in conserving nature should motivate us to readopt an attitude of protectionism towards what is left of our own natural habitats.

Many people in Germany suffer from an oversaturation of consumer goods, from too much and the wrong kinds of food, from a deluge of information, and from an impoverishment of contact with people and nature. Exploitation of resources has led to a decline of species and to contamination of every sphere of life.

Environmental education in Germany must therefore inevitably concern itself with these negative side effects of industrialization. Favourite school projects are: nature in the school-yard, protection of native amphibians, pollutants in food, energy problems, air pollution, ground contamination, water pollution, acid rain and

destruction of forests, the ozone hole and climate catastrophe, tropical forests...

Also and precisely where global issues are concerned, we must start with ourselves when taking action. The advice given us by our colleagues from tropical forest countries is part of a concept of mutual enrichment for which WWF gladly offers to act as intermediary. It cannot stop there.

It is just as necessary where education is concerned to exert political pressure on Ministries of Culture and Education and institutions for continued teacher training in the Federal States as it is to provide teaching materials.

The environmental centres are preparing projects on the issues of »climate, energy, and tropical forests« together with the Federal Ministry of Culture and Science in Bonn, so as to satisfy public interest on a nationwide basis to learn more about these subjects.

These activities should ring a hopeful note, and illustrate that only personal involvement can contribute to creating a viable future.

# The protection of Thailand's tropical forests

At the close of World War II, 65% of Thailand was covered by tropical forests. In 1991, the government estimated the current figure to be around 28%. It is more likely, however, that only 16 to 20% of rain forest territory remains relatively undisrupted.

Official policy intends to preserve 40% of the land as tropical forest. So-called economic forest is supposed to comprise 25%, and undisturbed virgin forest 15%.

Legal and illegal logging was the main reason for the decline of tropical forests in Thailand until 1989, when timbering was officially banned. Until then, working sites for commercial loggers even included 22 nature reserves.

Illegal logging continues, but to a lesser extent. The causes of deforestation in Thailand are the construction of dams in national parks and the sale of land by farmers. Golf courses and recreation areas are being set up for tourists everywhere.

Cooperation with government agencies is still very meagre. There are more than eight million people currently living without title in tropical forest areas. Those people are hardly receptive to the idea of conservation.

Bush fires are probably the most common method of destroying tropical forests in order to procure land illegally, or to drive animals from the forest to hunt.

We nature conservationists are now fighting the construction of four dams in wildlife refuges, and the menace of livestock production.

All attempts to restore tropical forests in Thailand have failed. Official estimates claim that less than 0.1% of the area has been successfully reforested, but even this figure is fictitious.

We still do not know what, where, or why we should plant. My own conviction is that we should leave exploited territories to the process of natural regeneration instead of creating monocultures of eucalyptus.

We need advice and practical help in drawing up development plans to sustain fauna and flora while allowing appropriate use of the tropical forests by its inhabitants.

Our conservation efforts are geared to altering the consciousness of our population and making people realize what the alternatives are to the enormous exploitation of tropical timber. It appears that we must find a way to control our economic growth.

Is it possible for us to value our culture, our religion, our environment and the pursuance of a better life-style more highly than economic growth?

The pursuance of private wealth destroys the natural system upon which we all depend. Thailand's five-year plan does not go far enough. What we actually need is something like a five-generation plan.

Illegal trade in animal and plant products places great pressure on our nature. Our rhinoceros have already disappeared, while the Asian elephant can still survive in a few protected areas. Primates are still prevalent, while hunting has decimated the population of

deer and wild buffalo. We are concerned about the massive loss of snakes which go to supply the Chinese market.

We must learn that the forests of Indochina are one single forest. We are utterly convinced that the forests of a specific region should support the local population. Once they become the object of international trade, they are lost.



# **Theses and demands of participants of the workshop: Nature protection and the importance of tropical forests**

## **2.1 Environmental education in tropical forest countries can only succeed if the concept of conservation is integrated within the living situation as a whole.**

The people must be given perspectives that lead to a direct improvement of their own standard of living and free them from the dictates of world market prices. This includes, for example, the re-introduction of traditional farming methods and polyculture instead of monoculture crop-growing. Only if the people can adequately feed themselves, will they be able to stop setting fires to clear land and hunting in wildlife reserves, and begin to collaborate in protecting the forests. Environmental education, therefore, cannot remain an isolated measure, but must be coupled with political action.

## **2.2. Environmental education in Germany must convey that consumer habits here and hunger in tropical countries combine to destroy the forests.**

It must demonstrate the relation between poverty in the »Third World« and international entanglements on the world market, e.g. the role of banks, in order to instill a feeling of personal responsibility and solidarity (One Earth).

Practical application in schools and in the classroom should always begin within the direct sphere of experience of children and youth, for example with consumer habits. A concrete approach might entail a visit to a store for building supplies followed by a discussion of why tropical timber is normally priced lower than native timber.

**2.3 The Ministries of Culture and Education must be required to revise curricula.**

Ecology should not be one subject among many, but rather an interdisciplinary approach with a firm place in teaching plans and sufficient latitude for practical assignments and projects. Nature conservation organizations should be consulted in the drafting of curricula.

**2.4 Environmental education must be given greater weight in teacher training and continued teacher training.**

Particular stress in this connection should be lent to interdisciplinary thinking, problem-oriented work methods, and learning through practical experience.

**2.5 Publishers of textbooks must design pertinent teaching materials which promote personal initiative on the part of pupils.**

These materials should not be directed exclusively to teachers. The general principle of environmental problems should be illustrated by selected examples.

## Threats to the tropical forests of Madagascar

### Environmental problems of Madagascar

Madagascar was probably once largely forested. Although climate changes have influenced the decline of forests, their destruction is mainly the work of man, who from the time of Madagascar's colonization has been conquering its forests.

It has been estimated that 2,000 square kilometres are being destroyed annually and that 80% of the forest has already vanished. Between 1979 and 1988, brush fires devasted around 111,000 square kilometres, an annual rate of 11,000 square kilometres. Between 1980 and 1984, 10,000 square kilometres were cleared for farm land. In addition, 132,000 tons of fire wood or charcoal are required, 94,000 tons for Tananarivo alone. As the forest disappears so do numerous hitherto undiscovered animals and plants which may contain potential medicines.

Madagascar has 11 million inhabitants. At a growth rate of 2.7%, by 1999 the population will number 14 million, 43% of whom will have not yet reached the age of fifteen, and 55% of whom will be under twenty. 52% of the population is concentrated on 13% of the land. Urbanization is on the increase. In 1990, the figure was 19%; a figure of 30% is projected for the year 2000, and for the year 2024 even 50% (a total of 13 million inhabitants).

In 1990 85% of the population was rural, living on land dissected by valleys, and therefore not very fit for cultivation. The inhabitants depend on clear-cutting, driving back primeval forests with all the

consequences (decline of species, erosion, silting of waterways and rice paddies, catastrophic flooding).

The increase in population demands a higher rate of agricultural productivity. It must definitely be intensified, but farmer and herds-men abide by traditional methods:

- Migratory farming (tavy): fields slashed and burned from the forests are cultivated and abandoned after two to three years once the soil has been depleted (1,500 to 2,000 square kilometres per year). Barren earth is left behind to wear and erode.
- Agricultural techniques: fertilization and crop rotation are seldom practiced. Worn out fields are rarely recultivated.
- Burning land to acquire new pasture: 90% of all fires are set by ranchers in order to stimulate growth of new vegetation. The fires are therefore a necessary evil, but unfortunately, they spread far and burn woodlands, reforested areas, crops, homes etc., and are thus a major factor in the depletion of natural resources.

An ever-growing population needs more room, but most farmers live from hand to mouth and cannot foresee the consequences of their actions. They cannot comprehend why they should protect land that has no apparent use and only poses an obstacle to livestock. Their only perspective is their own small living unit for which it is not detrimental to win a few »tavy« fields from the inexhaustible bounty of nature.

Moreover, there is a growing need for energy: In 1990, there was a demand for 132,000 tons of wood and charcoal (Tananarivo alone required 94,000 tons). Madagascar lost 2,000 square kilometres of forest as a result.

Poverty as a consequence of damage to environment: A report issued by the World Bank estimates that there are currently over a billion people living in poverty, i.e. with an annual income of less than \$370. The most acute poverty is found in rural areas.

In Madagascar, 85% of the population lives in such areas. The same report states that poverty is related to environmental destruction. In this connection it is necessary to call attention to the people living near big cities like Tananarivo — victims and at the same time agents of environmental destruction.

Environmental education must

- be adapted to concrete problems
- be interdisciplinary
- strengthen a sense of values
- emphasize a sense of community
- reflect upon the survival of man
- utilize the environmental commitment and initiative of pupils
- encourage discussion on the situation and the future.



## **Theses and demands of participants of the workshop: School partnerships**

**2.1 School partnerships provide a fundamentally positive method of promoting understanding of other cultures. They create the conditions which instil a global mentality in the children and youth of participant countries.**

**2.2 A direct and personal relationship is important for a working partnership.**

There must be a person (a teacher, a representative of a conservation organization), a kind of ambassador, acquainted with the situation and culture of both partner countries to act as liaison between the partner schools.

Many schools in tropical forest countries do not have any funds or materials. A letter to Europe often costs a considerable sum of money (a daily wage).

Language barriers and socio-cultural differences complicate a partnership. A lasting partnership has to be built up through contact persons.

**2.3 Meaningful school partnership must be long-term**

The technical arrangements alone involve a great deal of time, since mail frequently requires months to arrive. Teachers here often head a class for only a limited time, making it difficult to establish long-term partnerships.

In order to ensure necessary continuity, partnerships should not be based on the initiative of a single person, but should rather be developed as a team or school effort.

## **2.4 The establishment of a partnership should not be seen as a missionary task.**

This applies particularly to »developed« countries. The motto »we want to help« should not be the main consideration.

The countries of the North should be receptive to learning from their partner countries in the South (culture, mentality).

## **2.5 Anyone interested in establishing a partnership should begin with modest expectations.**

A good way of starting a partnership is through »non-verbal« communication, for example through drawings. The evaluation of drawings demonstrated that children on each side have very false conceptions of their partner.

## **2.6 Teachers interested in working on the establishment of school partnerships should be freed from other duties so as to have the time to do so during the normal school day.**

## **Reforestation and the needs of people living in and around India's national parks**

India is an agrarian society in which land is the most important commodity for development. Land is needed for farming, forestry, pasture land, urban and industrial development and transportation routes. India is facing a great number of development problems, and the two largest are population growth and the destruction of forests.

There are around 576 thousand villages in India. Gandhi once said that India is composed of villages. »When the villages disappear, so will India«. The economy of village society is based on the use of biological resources. Tribal peoples have been living for centuries from the cultivation of woodland. The large-scale destruction of forests, however, has only occurred during the past 30 years.

There is no doubt that we are on the brink of an environmental catastrophe of gigantic proportions. The demand of wealthy urban classes for wood to construct housing and furniture, and the needs of rural poor for firewood are the underlying reasons for the indiscriminate cutting of trees. There is no alternative to firewood so available, economic and self-replenishing for rural people to use.

India is losing its forests at a rate of 250 thousand hectares per year. There are 90 million head of livestock grazing in the forests, although our forests have the capacity to sustain at most 30 million. This overgrazing is a tremendous problem. During the decade of 1970 to 1980, between 20 and 30 million hectares of tropical forests were sacrificed to migration farming in Asian and Pacific territories.

At present there are 445 national parks and nature reserves in India. It is not only an important environmental task, but above all a challenge of social and economic relevance to protect those sensitive tracts of land, as well as to adapt them to meet the growing needs of the local populations. In that connection, the education of the people living in and around national parks plays a vital role. The development of appropriate village and neighbourhood infrastructures is one of the most important tasks confronting the present.

Ranthambhore National Park and the Hingolgadh Nature Education Park, as well as the projects of the Centre for Environment Education in Ahmedabad, are meant to demonstrate in an exemplary way the feasibility of combining conservation interests with the interests of the people.

These pilot projects have succeeded in developing alternative fuels, and food sources, and other options to logging for the indigenous populations by involving village community groups with park management tasks in motivation and training programmes.



# **Theses and demands of participants of the workshop: Environmental education in Germany and in countries with tropical forests**

## **2.1 In Germany, as well as in India, model networks of environmental education must be developed involving schools, universities, teacher training colleges, independent conservation groups and government agencies.**

For this purpose, government subsidized environmental centres, for example, could be made an intrinsic part of the education system. In Germany, the conference of the ministers of education and culture of the Federal States could suggest to each Federal State the development of cooperation between conservation groups and environmental centres.

## **2.2 Education in ecology should be made compulsory for all teachers.**

Ecological topics must become a fixed component of the curriculum, and an integral part of basic and continued teacher training programs.

## **2.3 Applied learning appealing to and schooling all the senses of learners should be central to the presentation of ecological topics.**

A purely scientific approach can be dispensed with, and more priority should be lent instead to activities like a school garden.

## **2.4 A conservationist approach to nature should not only be expected from countries with tropical forests, but should also be demanded of the affluent countries of Europe and North America.**

## **Marcio Campos**

# **An alternative to destruction — the knowledge of the Kayapó people. Possibilities for an Amazon future compatible with nature**

I would like to speak about alternatives to the destruction of tropical forests, about the Kayapó people in the Amazons, and how their lifestyle interrelates with the forest, as well as about their celestial calendar and the influence it has on nature.

The Kayapó live along the Fresco River in a total of 19 villages with approximately 3000 people. Until now they have remained largely sheltered from white influence. The situation is changing now that government agencies are trying to force schools and other kinds of infrastructures upon them along with a lifestyle completely foreign to their own.

What is the natural lifestyle of the Kayapó? Before sunrise, the men gather in the house of the warrior and study the sky to see which star or constellation is visible before dawn. The constellations determine the seasonal calendar of the Kayapó and their relation to nature.

They know exactly when certain time markers change position.

They know exactly whether the rains arrive on time or when the season for celebration has come. The year begins in June when the rainy season is approaching an end and the river is high. This is the time for fishing in the still very swollen river and the time of the hunt. A ceremony is held to celebrate those events.

Afterwards, the Kayapó prepare their circular fields for cultivating beans. The beans grow under the shelter of trees which shield these delicate plants from being eaten by animals. Then the Kayapó plants bananas, letting them grow without any special attention.

By then the waters of the river have largely receded, and the rains begin again. At this time the Kayapó fish with the aid of a plant that they grind onto the water. The water level is so low that they can practically catch the fish with their hands.

Then comes the last big celebration of the cycle, the feast of maize, for which the Kayapó catch tortoises. Special flowers which grow at that time are gathered by the children. The rains follow, initiating the next cycle.

The manioc cycle alternates with the maize cycle. Farming activities are always accompanied by their own particular celebrations. A time of rest follows the harvest. During this season white butterflies appear in large numbers on the banks of the shallow river to absorb minerals.

The Kayapó calendar is not just a table with numbers, but a calendar with an intrinsic logic closely connected with detailed observations of nature and with a life whose cultural and social phenomena are intimately linked to nature. This lifestyle is important for sustaining nature and important for the relation between man and nature.

I believe we can truly learn a great deal from the Kayapó, in particular how to observe nature, and use an altogether interdisciplinary approach in doing so.

To close, I would like to comment on the relationship between our world and the world of the Kayapó. If we take a look at the house in

which we live, we see a house associated with agriculture, industry, trade and finance, in other words, with the accumulation of goods.

We live in houses and can survive there. We need money to survive and we produce considerable amounts of waste. Our houses have a warehouse character, and are marked by industrial activity and privacy, and that has to do with our self-concept and what we own.

Indigenous houses still possess the dimension of sacredness, and are a representation of the cosmos. The Kayapó warrior house, for example, is positioned so as to face the sun and has a high degree of socio-cultural significance. It protects the tools which are needed for hunting and fishing. It does not serve as a storehouse for goods, as those can be found in nature itself: in the forest, in the lake and in the river.

The Kayapó recycle their surpluses. What we see as waste, they reuse, leaving nothing. In their way of life we find a natural storage system. The goods come from nature, from the right place at the right time.

The concept of private property is transcended by the concept of community. The concept of self is translated into something sacred, into that in which the people believe. The people are in harmony with nature.

## **Theses and demands of the participants of the workshop: Indigenous societies and their culture**

### **2.1 Environmental education in Germany can receive valuable impulses from indigenous cultures and their wholistic view of the world.**

Our own European-centred world-view and western lifestyle must be recognized and modified, and a disposition must be developed to perceive the environment differently.

### **2.2 The topic of indigenous rain-forest peoples with all its complexities can only be dealt with within the framework of a interdisciplinary, project-oriented working approach.**

Degradation of rain forests, and destruction of indigenous cultures must be treated as part of the North-South conflict. The causes of this process must be made an integral part of the rainforest debate.

### **2.3 Teaching plans, framing guidelines, curricula and basic and continued teacher training must give more attention to global environmental topics than has been the case in the past.**

Moreover, they must develop methods and didactic principles of interdisciplinary learning processes.

*The destruction of forests, in particular tropical forests, does not only have indirect consequences for the whole of mankind but is directly injurious to the people who live in or on the periphery of these forests. Sharad Kulkarni works at the Centre for Tribal Conscientization, Pune, India. The article is a reprint from Asian Action, newsletter of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development, 69, 1988.*

**Sharad Kulkarni**

## **Deforestation, tribal communities and popular movements**

The total area of forests in the world is about 4700 million hectares (about 32% of the total land area). Of these about 2,800 million hectares (69% of the forest area) are covered with closed forests, broad-leaved and coniferous forests and about 1,300 million hectares are less densely-wooded open forests.

In general, only the closed forests are suitable for commercial timber operations. Natural shrub-lands and degraded forests in developing countries cover about 675 million hectares of land.

On a global basis, the world forests are disappearing at the rate of 15 million hectares each year. Most of these losses are occurring in the humid parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The average annual rate of deforestation in tropical countries has been estimated at 11 million hectares. This deforestation has led to the loss of valuable genetic resources and has created shortages in fuel-wood supplies.

The extent of deforestation varies from country to country. It is estimated that if the present trends continue, both forest cover and growing stocks of commercial size wood, in less developed regions (Latin America, Africa, Asia and Oceania), will decline by 40% by 2000 A.D. The rate of deforestation is high mainly in the developing countries. The developed countries like Japan, U.S.A. rely heavily on the import of forest products from the developing countries such as Malaysia and countries in Latin America, particularly those in the Amazon basin. These imports constitute a major cause of deforestation in the developing countries, the disastrous consequences of which have created a critical situation in many countries of Africa.

## **Causes of deforestation**

Diversion of forest lands to agriculture, commercial exploitation of forests, loss of forest lands caused by large irrigation and hydroelectricity projects, cutting of trees for fuelwood and cattle ranching are the major causes of deforestation.

In developing countries, large areas under forest are cleared for agriculture. Commercial exploitation is also responsible for large scale deforestation. Wood is still the main source of fuel in all the developing countries. About half of all the wood cut in the world each year is burned as fuel. Cattle ranching also is taking a heavy toll of forests in the Amazon region.

In the developing countries several large irrigation and hydroelectricity projects are being undertaken resulting in the destruction of large chunks of forest.

## **Impact of deforestation on the environment**

### **Desertification**

Deforestation results in desertification and drought due to the decline of environmental support systems essential for sustainable agriculture. The impact of deforestation is most seriously felt in a number of countries in Africa.

### **Loss of genetic diversity**

Deforestation, particularly that of tropical moist forest areas, will create a permanent degradation of biological productivity. Effects of deforestation on the existence of several plant and animal species is vividly described in the Global 2000 report. Largely a consequence of deforestation and the taming of wild areas, the projected loss over two decades of approximately one-fifth of all species on the planet is a prospective loss to the world that is literally beyond evaluation.

### **Loss of soil**

Deforestation leads to soil erosion with disastrous consequences in the reduction of soil fertility, in increasing floods, heavy siltation of dams, tanks, reservoirs, streams and rivers. The long-term effect of soil erosion undermining the ecological firmament that supports our existence is even more dangerous.

## **Rainfall**

Deforestation also results in climatic changes. The links between climate and forests, particularly rainfall, are not well understood. Forests destruction is believed to be responsible for a significant decrease in rainfall.

## **Employment**

Forests provide employment to a large number of persons in felling of trees, processing and transport of wood and collection of minor forest produce.

## **Food availability**

Deforestation leads to a decrease in average per capita food availability as a result of loss in soil fertility. Nepal which has lost one-third of its legally reserved forests since 1947 and now has only 12 percent of its land surface under tree cover has seen its per capita food production fall by 17 percent.

## **Tribal societies**

Members of tribal communities all over the world are the worst victims of deforestation. The few communities living exclusively on hunting and gathering lose their source of survival due to deforestation. These communities are slowly becoming extinct.

Tribal communities, living partly on hunting and gathering and partly on the sale of forest produce, wage employment and agriculture, also suffer heavily because of deforestation. First, they lose a considerable portion of their means of livelihood derived

from the forest. Deforestation increases the workload on women who now have to work longer to collect fuel and fodder. Deforestation also reduces the quantity of fore-gatherings and thus there is a reduction in their income from the sale of such fore-gatherings.

Most of the tribal communities use herbal medicines which they obtain from forests. Medicinal plants are lost in the process of deforestation.

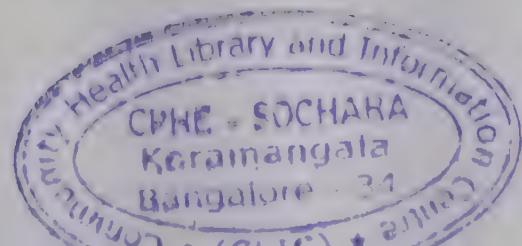
Tribal communities are also culturally closely related to the forest. Their folklore centres around different species of trees and most of their rituals are connected with certain trees.

Deforestation also leads to loss of employment in forest-based activities. In many countries a large number of members of tribal communities are employed in the felling of trees, processing and transport of wood and sale of minor forest produce. It is estimated that collection and sale of minor forest produce provides employment for about 30 million people annually in India.

A number of tribal communities have become extinct. Disease to deforestation has taken a heavy toll of tribal lives. Deforestation disturbs the environment and the introduction of new diseases by travellers and colonists and the increasing number of rodents and insects change a relatively healthy forest area into a disease-ridden area within a few years. Tribal people, in the belief they have their own medical treatment to control endemic disease, fall an easy prey to the new diseases.

Almost all the tribal societies have suffered due to deforestation, such as the Bateks in Malaysia.

This semang group had a population of about 300 persons in 1981. They lived in the watershed of the Lebir river in South-eastern Kelantan province in Malaysia. By the end of 1980 about one-third



of the area, traditionally occupied by the Batek, was cleared. This loss of forest has drastically altered the nomadic lifestyle of the Bateks.

Some Bateks are gradually retreating into deep forest. If the process of deforestation continues, so too will the demise of the traditional Batek way of life.

## **Forest policies**

We have already noted that commercial exploitation is a major cause of deforestation. The governments in the countries with vast natural forest areas look upon these as a very lucrative source of finance and encourage unlimited logging. This is taking place in the Amazon region, in Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia and a number of countries in Africa. Ethiopia, once the most densely forested country has lost most of its forests and as a result is suffering from recurrent famine.

Before these countries were colonized, exploitation of forests was quite limited. However, the entry of colonial rulers initiated the process of deforestation in the name of scientific management of forest. One can see this from the evolution of forest policy adopted by the British rulers in India.

What took place in India also took place in all colonized countries. All these countries treated their forests as an important source of revenue. Export of forest produce increased after these colonies became independent. Massive deforestation not only affected tribal populations but also led to overall degradation as witnessed in the case of Ethiopia.

## **Anti-deforestation movements**

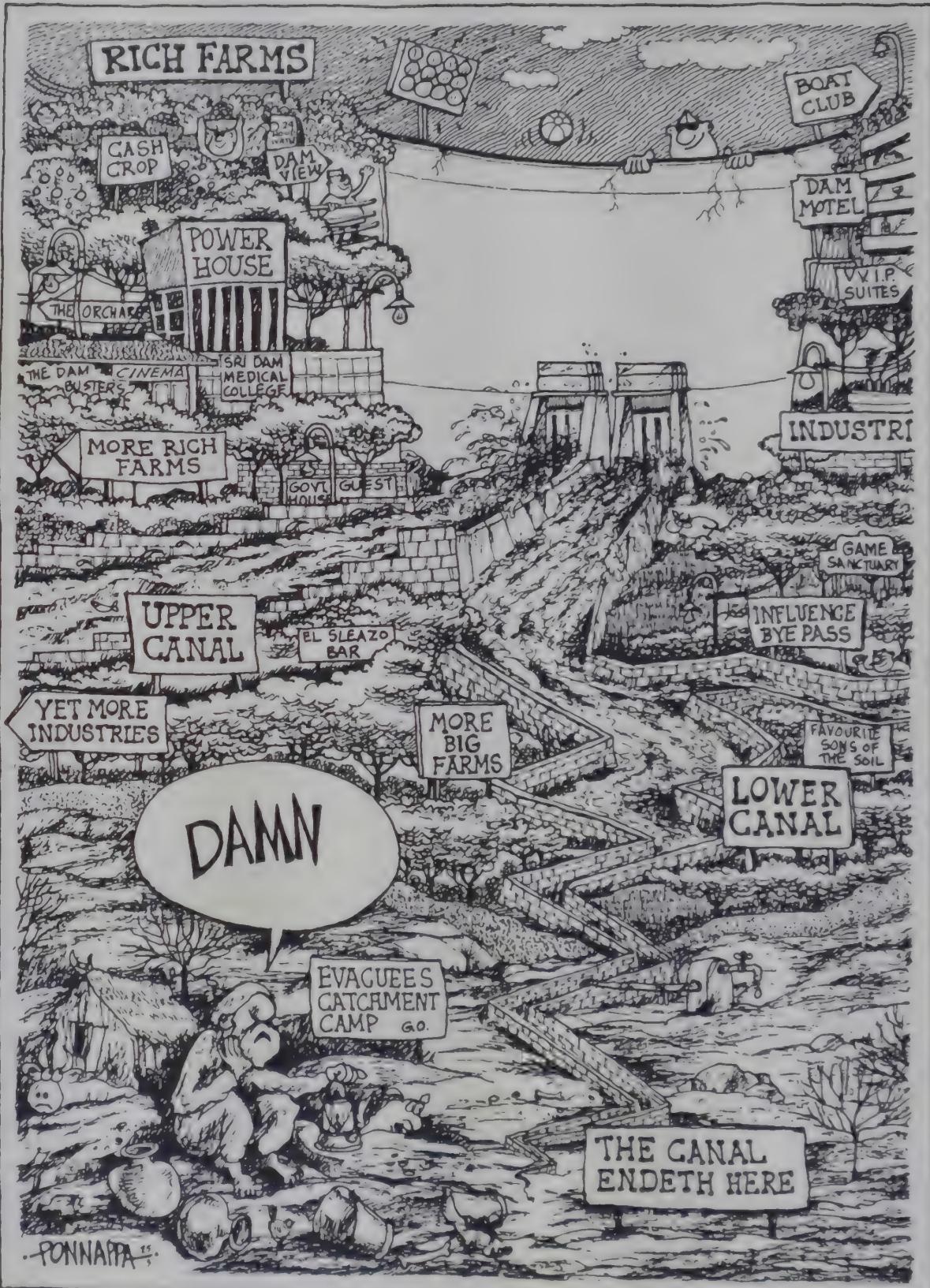
Tribal communities have lived in a symbiotic relationship with forests. Almost all the tribes believe in the permanence of life. According to their philosophy, even the ancestors live with them in the form of spirits. They believe that natural resources like land, water and trees are a treasure to be protected by each generation for the next. This philosophy has led them to adopt ways of what is now called sustainable development. They have always resisted deforestation for commercial purposes.

There have been mass movements against deforestation e.g. in India in the Himalaya region there is the movement which has come to be known as the »Chipko« movement, meaning hugging the trees to resist the attempt to cut them down. In Malaysia also, the hill tribes in the hilly areas of Sarawak have raised rough barricades to halt logging in their areas. In the Philippines, members of the Isnag, Bontoc and Kalinga tribes are organising protest movements against deforestation in respective areas in their own way.

## **Conclusions**

The all-pervading and accelerating process of deforestation is not only an environmental hazard but also disastrous for the survival of the hunting and gathering communities, particularly those living in hitherto inaccessible areas. Indigenous communities are the major victims of this process of deforestation.

However, members of tribal communities have begun to resist this process of deforestation. Environmental considerations have attracted the attention of the environmentalist towards the method of sustainable development followed by the tribal communities. A large number of environmental groups are supporting the anti-deforestation protests of the tribal communities. One hopes that this double pressure from tribal communities and the environmentalists will be able to check the process of deforestation.



*This article is again about conceptual reflections and practical experience. They have been taken from the manifold approaches of local Volkshochschulen in Germany. Dr. Heino Apel is Project Director for the »Integration of Environmental Themes in Adult Education Courses« of the Pedagogical Institute, German Adult Education Association, Holzhausenstraße 21, 6000 Frankfurt, Germany.*

**Heino Apel**

## **Integrated environmental adult education**

Man's disturbed relation to nature unfortunately is not structured so that an ever-ready list of environmental precepts and prohibitions would suffice to establish a long-term balance between humans and the demands of nature. Pessimists hold that only a wonder can provide a solution to the environmental crisis which is becoming more and more acute. We feel that environmentally compatible modes of production, consumption, and lifestyle for all can only be attained through a concerted search effort. Seeking blame one-sidedly, depending on one's bias, in politicians, the individual, industry or the capitalist system of economy, is a favourite but ineffective method of mastering a crisis.

If we accept that everyone must revise his way of thinking, it follows that everyone must also learn anew. It is not enough to merely grasp and accept the situation. What is needed is creativity and innovative personal participation issuing from an understanding of the situation in its complexity.

In short, we should no longer ask whether it is opportune to accept environmental education as a component of basic education. Environmental knowledge is rather increasingly becoming a subjective and societal requirement for survival. The intricate pervasion of anthropogenic causes of alterations in nature lends virtually every decision today the potential of effecting our environment, since nature is overburdened by population growth and industrialization.

## **Environmental education in the *Volkshochschule***

*Volkshochschule* activities in the field of environmental education as a rule have an immediate world-oriented sphere of reference, dealing with environmental problems from a specific angle. The more concretely a course addresses everyday needs, the higher the chances are for its actually taking place.

Typical programmes of this category are:

- Environmentally-conscious construction
- Toxic substances in food!?
- Conservation in daily life
- Health hazards of environmental toxicants
- Detergents and cleaning fluids — A healthy way to cleanliness?
- Cosmetics and body-care items — A healthy way to beauty?

Those courses which in an immediate way aim to assist in the household decision-making process, however, are not unpro-

blematic from the perspective of a critical environmental education. Concentration on one aspect of the problem subtly reproduces precisely those established modes of thinking which should be revised. »Detergents with phosphates are bad, so use one with alternative additives«. In other words, when analysis turns up a mono-causal situation, a simple solution, or a recipe is offered. It would be important to also discuss the framework of conditions above and beyond patent recipes in which topics like »household management« are imbedded. Furthermore, a product should not just be examined as to the problems of its usage, but also as to the problems inherent in its production and disposal in order to foster sensitivity for the intricacy of connections.

Knowledge of causal relations as concerns damage, and technical possibilities for change develop so fast that rules of behaviour which still appear to be wise today can already become inappropriate tomorrow. Course participants schooled in so-called correct behaviour may very well be prone to resignation when they learn that the wisdoms of their course have suddenly become obsolete. Adult education does not generally intend to offer solutions; it is only supposed to increase proficiency in coping with problems.

A contrast to environmental courses of a more action-oriented nature is provided in a range of global courses, which by name already address very broad topics. Examples are:

- Everyone wants to return to nature — but not on foot.
- Environmental ethics — Learning to think ecologically
- City ecology
- Political ecology
- Paradisic growth — Infernal consequences?
- Computer and environment
- Work and environment.

Such courses are at a considerable disadvantage in recruiting sufficient participants, although it is more or less possible to word their descriptions so as to connect them with situations imaginable in everyday life. They are less apt to be offered, and are frequently cancelled due to insufficient enrollment. It might be that such courses are not so popular as a rule because the normal uninformed citizen is not likely to see why he should deal with an idealistic subject which to his mind has no bearing on his immediate world.

It is not the object here to favour courses of a too concrete nature over those that are too abstract. In the context of an environmental concept for a *Volkshochschule*, so-called recipe courses are completely justified for the sake of initiation, whereby it is a question of training instructors to instil awareness for the broader context already within the scope of those courses, so as to lay the groundwork and foster conditions which motivate participants to attend functions of a more general nature.

When interdisciplinary subjects are offered, however, the aforementioned abstract course titles should be avoided. Making reference to content or the local scene helps potential participants to realize that the topics in question do have personal relevance. Here are some examples:

- My environmental policy
- Ecological hikes through the foothills of the Bavarian Alps
- City living space — Committee for Environmental Planning in Neuhausen
- Redevelopment in Bockenheim — Retrospective, planning, problems.

One of the biggest obstacles in organising interdisciplinary functions is the single-discipline education of most *Volkshochschule* staff. »City ecology« as a topic, for example, has aspects relating to the social, political, and natural sciences, to aesthetics and to ad-

ministrative law. It is naturally not required for an instructor to be versed in all those fields, but he or she must at least have an interdisciplinary grasp of their significant connections. Even when a department head has that qualification, he or she is seldom able to find instructors from one field who are capable of real teamwork with a colleague from a different field. Unless instructors receive added training in this area, such functions will remain the exception.

Participants as a rule, depending on their education or motivation, also have a specialized background from which they are reluctant to digress, and then in so many directions. This has to do with the hurdle of unfamiliar terminology and methodology. Hence, the participant aspect, too, makes it difficult to carry out environment-related functions of a broader nature.

The environmental courses listed above were taken from an un-systematic examination of curricula from larger *Volkshochschulen*. Under the aspect of integrated environmental education they constitute an external type of integration, in other words the very course title explicitly connects environment with a specific field or complex of fields. In an historical look at education, this type of function (»... and the environment«) often signals a preliminary stage. As environmental consciousness grew in the wake of flagrant abuse of nature, an interest developed for dealing with the circumstances along specialized lines. »Chemicals in the household« or »Environmental crime in the office«, are examples of functions which add a new dimension to an old topic under a very current perspective. The externally imposed environmental topic loses its relevance to the extent in which it becomes matter-of-fact to produce and dispose household and office chemicals in an environmentally appropriate manner. It is then no longer necessary to continue to speak of household management and environment. The environmental aspect grows to be normal subject matter and internal integration takes place.

## Integrated environmental education

Environmental education is integrated when an educational function not explicitly devoted to the environment nevertheless contains clear references to the environment.

The term integration is used to distinguish the simple adding of a new subject to the curriculum from the weaving of a whole new realm of knowledge into the content of an entirely different sector. In this connection integrated professional knowledge takes on a mediating function. Integrated knowledge is not a substitute for specialized learning. In other words, integrated environmental education is not intended to produce environmental experts, but rather to provide the learner with just enough understanding to fully comprehend the environmental problems existing in the sector so that he can begin looking for solutions. It is often possible to transmit such knowledge by altering perspectives and supplementing the content of the course in question with specific information.

A typical learning goal of environmental education is the recognition of complex interrelations. The methodical postulate is not the isolation of secondary conditions and concentration on a simple cause-effect context, but rather the examination of parameters of influence as inclusive as possible and their resulting interactions. When introduced into a specialized field, this postulate broadens the scope of traditional questions and, through environmental integration new connections are revealed which were hitherto deemed insignificant. Integrated environmental education should provide the key in specialized fields to interdisciplinary cooperation and cross-field communication on problems of overriding significance. Applying this to adult education, the goal is to make adult learners competent in judging interdisciplinary environmental phenomena starting at the level of everyday-life and continuing on up through professional qualifying courses.

In the foregoing we described the work of the *Volkshochschule* in environmental education in general as a process which should lead from explicit functions in any one field (external integration) to a complete integration of environmental concepts into education in the field as a whole (internal integration). Table 1 provides a summary of the differences between external integration (environment courses) and integrated environmental education.

	<i>environmental courses external integration</i>	<i>integrated environmental education</i>
subject matter	field-related courses AND the environment	specialized content with environmentally relevant references
emphasis	the environmental point of view	field-related topics
cross- references to other fields	concentrates for the most part on two fields	multi-disciplinary
example	chemistry in the household	household management

## Why Integration?

If environmental education is to have a perspective of becoming a component of fundamental learning in specialized subjects, the necessary conditions must, of course, first be created. During the period of transition, teachers must receive added training and teaching materials must be developed. A project for the development of such materials hastens to the necessary process of change in the subject matter of many fields.

A function solely dedicated to ecology must borrow from other fields to demonstrate ecological connections. For a heterogeneous audience this can mean that not everyone will derive the same illustrative value from the examples. Functions of the type »environment and...«, as already mentioned, have the latent tendency of becoming recipe courses which, educationally speaking, are not likely to produce more than something like rather discriminate customers for health food stores.

Functions explicitly devoted to environmental education run the risk of failure since environmental phenomena are the result of multi-dimensional processes which cannot be described adequately from the perspective of a single sphere, even if that sphere is called ecology. Accordingly, adult education should offer environmental subjects in an integrated way. Environmental education should not be isolated in special environmental courses; it should rather be mentioned whenever the opportunity for a connection with the environment arises.

The aspect of interconnectedness so important for acquiring environmental knowledge is intrinsic to an integrated approach. Specialized material becomes the base for establishing further connections to interdisciplinary phenomena. For example, in a course on nutrition and health foods, the question can be introduced as to who produces organic foods and under what conditions. In that connection, aspects of nutrition can be linked to problems of organic farming. Concrete problems in nutrition and marketing become evident, and can be taken to effectively illustrate essential areas of environmental education.

Even here, the complexity of relations cannot be completely demonstrated, but it will be developed in a concrete connection. This is much more persuasive than just postulating the concept of interrelatedness and then tediously trying to support it with examples.

The foregoing arguments should demonstrate that it is precisely the concrete and specialized aspects of the environmental sciences which provide the best arguments for integration, in other words for developing an approach to environmental questions which emanates from applied technical knowledge.

In addition, however, adult education also offers strategical arguments for integration. The framework of conditions within which courses can be offered by public institutions like the *Volkshochschulen* is structured so as to require a very immediate bearing on the situation of the audience from those courses.

Courses which do not supply directly applicable information are at a growing disadvantage to the large selection of after-work leisure activities available for passive consumption. When added to a suggestion of ideology, or a suspicion that the course intends to preach or convert behaviour, motivation to participate disappears completely. For these reasons, many attempts have failed to realize educational activities confined solely to environmental policy or some other purely environmental topic.

As long as we, in our capacity as policy makers of education, consider it to be by no means superfluous to transmit knowledge, which although not directly applicable, is related to personality development and to professional and political proficiency, we must seek ways in which to win the acceptance of our audiences for such material. Linking it to specialized courses is the obvious way, and need not be rejected for reasons of emancipation, either.

## **Methods of integration**

It is our premise that to integrate environmental education in a specific technical context does not necessarily require new forms of learning but rather, at most, modes of learning specific to

ecology and modified content. The main difficulty in integrating environmental aspects will be to preclude inconsistencies in content or methods inexplicable for participants.

The question of the right method of integrating environmental material within a specialized context cannot be viewed independent from the intensity of this integration (cf. Table 2)

A first stage of environmental integration could be called environmental associations which either are introduced consciously by the instructor or which are brought into discussion by the participants themselves.

For example, if in a language or literature course there is a poetical treatment of the forest, it becomes obvious to ask how long the forest will remain the way the author has described it. If there is a real digression on the topic of vanishing forests, an element of environmental education has been assimilated within the course. It is typical for this kind of integration that it can occur unexpectedly, and that it can be seen by the participants as a ramification of the material, which as such is less relevant.

The next stage of integration can be the planned digression on environmental aspects developed on the basis of the relevant material. The instructor devotes one or more class sessions to the examination of environmental consequences of aspects hitherto analyzed from the technical angle. An example might be a pottery course in which questions can be discussed like the amount of energy required to bake the items, the chemical composition of glazes, their disposal etc.

The last stage of integrating environmental education would be to subject the entire course material and structure to a continual examination of relevant links to the environment.

The three stages of integration as outlined above are increasingly demanding in the degree to which they intend to incorporate interdisciplinary or interlocking aspects. Accordingly, their educational goals in the area of environment become more comprehensive with each step.

<i>stage of integration</i>	<i>characteristic</i>
associative incidental	occasional, spontaneous illustrations and questions with respect to environmentally relevant factors on the part of participants or instructors
areas of concentration	as a unit or special cohesive topic inserted within the main subject
total integration	the relation to environment runs like a red thread throughout the entire function; the technical material and environmental aspects appear to be interwoven

The methods and techniques of getting across the information should be suited to the subject based on the degree of intensity of the integration. Nature should not be dealt with abstractly as an isolated topic. It can be lived and experienced (excursions), or at least visualized (slides, objects etc.). The technique of changing methods should not be abrupt, but if applied in appropriate doses it can, example given, help learners to grasp interrelations as connected transitions between two actually different worlds. Pursuing interdisciplinary elements of cause and effect implies working one's way through numerous and very different areas of knowledge. This provides the occasion for benefiting from different sources of knowledge obtained in group-work and gives learners the chance to practice teamwork which is so important in connection with environment.

## Planning environmental education in the *Volkshochschule*

If we consider environmental education to be an important component of basic education in today's world, *Volkshochschule* efforts in this field should give preference to concept over spontaneity. Beyond the realm of patent courses, for example, the planning conferences of *Volkshochschulen* should discuss their intended profile in environmental education as a whole, and what related activities could be offered within which disciplines. Deciding to devote one semester to a particular interdisciplinary topic can have a stimulating effect upon the various disciplines to each make their own contributions. In order to implement the concept it will be necessary to provide explanatory information to make it clear to the general audience that environmentally related mosaic pieces are part of all activities or functions offered. Cross references in *Volkshochschule* catalogues calling attention to related subject matter and supplementary material in other disciplines have proven to be successful. A continual multi-faceted range of integrated environmental education opportunities needs to be planned in advance. In other words, sequentially organized functions must also be conceived without insisting on a rigid structure of access requirements and partial qualification prerequisites.

Sequel courses can be based on motivation prompted by concern (toxicants in foods), on interest in a specific topic (nutrition and health foods) or on stimulation of interest through a catalogue of environmentally-integrated educational opportunities. In an ideal situation follow-up courses should be planned so as to be held at the same time and with the same instructor. In that way the participants of the introductory course will not need to adjust their schedules or invest new initial trust.

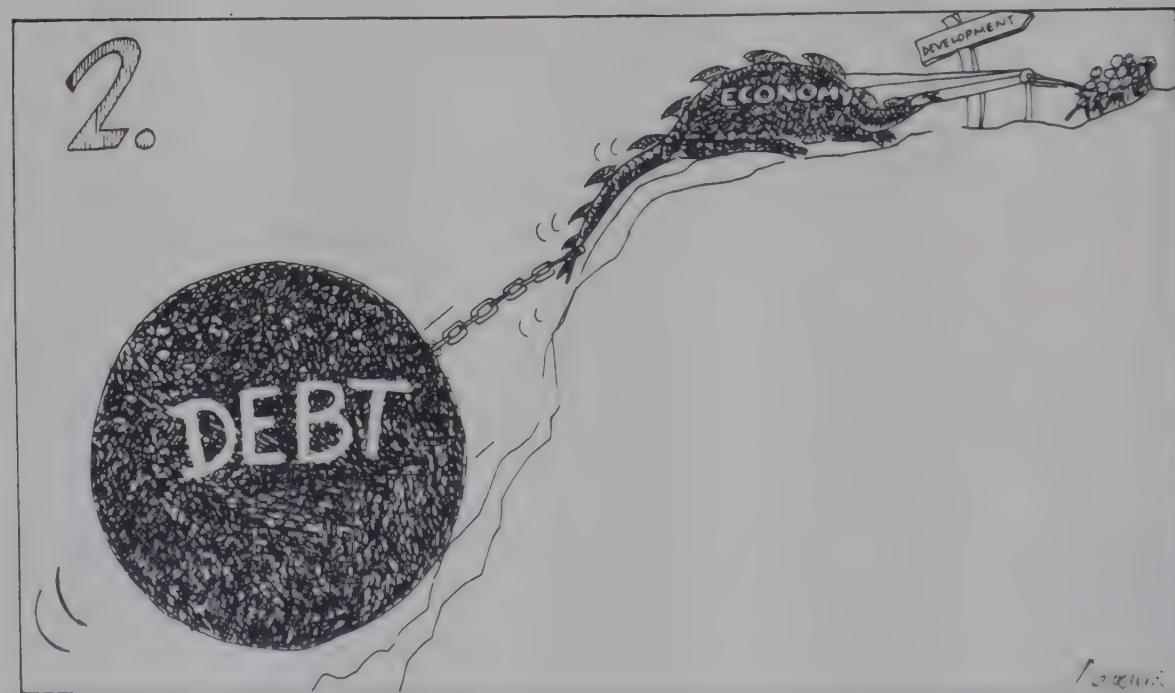
The integration of environmental education, as mentioned at the outset, aims at altering consciousness by transmitting information. In this respect it has a formative character which can be interpreted

by opponents of ecological preaching as introducing ideology into the teaching of technical matter. The more successfully environmental aspects are integrated within education, i.e. the more closely they are related to the topic, the less chance there is of censure for sneaking subject matter into a function or course. Whether formal descriptions of functions should make reference to the environmental aspect is something which has to be decided from case to case.

## **Further training for teaching and planning staff**

Functions in which environmental education is integrated require dedicated and environmentally versed instructors. In this connection, care must be exercised in tapping the reservoir of specialists from environmental associations and groups. Environmental experts tend to turn the area of knowledge which is supposed to be integrated within a technical sphere into a subject in its own right, since in doing so they can better develop their own area of competence. This has an anti-integrative effect on learners, who see the environmental topic in question as superimposed.

The points dealt with in the foregoing section indicate a substantial need for planning in the various departments as well as in overall administration, and this naturally presupposes a certain grasp of the relations among diverse environmental phenomena. Consequently, department heads and *Volkshochschule* directors cannot be exempt from further training if we intend to succeed in intensifying the environmental component of educational activities offered by the *Volkshochschule*.



*The attempt to link environmental education and literacy is undertaken in this article from Nigeria. Adebola Adekoya (Ph.D.) works at the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ilorin, PMB 1515, Ilorin, Nigeria.*

**Adebola Adekoya**

## **Environmental education in adult literacy programmes in Nigeria**

### **Introduction**

There have been few programmes of adult literacy in Nigeria which have dealt with the ecological dimension of our living. Many illiterates do not know the importance of the interrelationship between man and his environment. Most adult literacy programmes devote attention to the question of identifying and recruiting illiterates. The illiterates are enrolled to start literacy activities which are planned by a directorate of Mass Education. The focus of the curriculum of adult education as advertised by the directorate, excludes the vital issue of eco-crisis, including desertification,

drought and destruction of wildlife; problems common in Nigeria today.

It is the position of this paper that adult literacy programmes must now endeavour to include an environmental education component in their curricula. Just as it is important to acquire skills in reading, writing and arithmetic so too, is it essential to include the solving of existential problems in adult literacy training.

### **Why introduce environmental education into adult literacy programmes**

For those of us who believe that environmental education should be community-based, there is no better avenue to start creating awareness of the interaction and interdependence between living organisms and their surroundings than in adult literacy programmes. There is often a genuine need for the participants of adult literacy programmes to be involved in ameliorating problems of relevance to the community in which they live (Randas, 1987).

A programme designed to encourage adult learners to seek information that may transform the society to sustainability is very important at the present stage of the world's development. Adult literacy programmes need to cater for information needs of the adults in managing their environment; including information in the area of water pollution and destruction of wildlife habitats.

Second, the ethical problems connected with: (i) the philosophy of growth in relation to the eco-philosophical perspective; (ii) concept of »standard-of-living«; and (iii) the responsibilities of the individual and society towards ecological balancing, transcends age and time. An adult literacy programme designed to provide basic concepts and understanding of these problems, will go a long way in making the adult-learner a better citizen of the world.

Third, the problems of energy-crisis and their impact on the national economy of many developing countries, make the understanding of concepts and learning activities related to energy uses and resource management, relevant in any programme of adult literacy. The many changes that many national economies go through whenever there is an increase in the price of petroleum and its products, make the teaching of environmental conservation topics relevant in adult literacy programmes. For an oil producing country such as Nigeria, where the problem of oil spillage and its attendant shortcomings are gaining increasing attention, educating adult residents of riverine areas where the majority of oil spillages are experienced, is rather welcomed (UNESCO, 1980).

The need for skills in the critical evaluation of ecological problems is another reason for integrating environmental education into adult literacy programmes. It is necessary that information about educational values and assumptions that inform environmental education policies, resources and practices are passed on to adult learners (Fien, 1991).

Finally, to promote adult literacy and raise citizen's consciousness of environmental education there is the need to have in place, a programme of training that is both student- and discipline-centered. An adult literacy programme that is student- and discipline-centered will pay attention to the problem of environmental pollution and its attendant repercussion among others.

### **A pilot programme**

In the past, adult literacy classes in the riverine areas of Nigeria have concentrated on teaching information materials which have little bearing on environmental education. This has in many cases given the issue of environmental education a back-seat in the adult literacy programmes. The components of environmental edu-

tion, including pollution problems, population development, sea and land resources, energy and uses of resources are least discussed. However, with the coming of the problems of oil spillage, burst pipelines and society's insistant criticism of environmental damage, a few oil companies have taken the initiative to introduce into their community development programmes, adult literacy training in the area of environmental protection and conservation. In a pilot programme administered by Shell Development Corporation of Nigeria at Ogbe-Ijah, Bendel State, Nigeria, adult trainers as well as learners, are taught modern techniques of fish farming and how best to cope with the problem of fresh-water pollution.

Three basic areas of training needs are addressed: safety, sanitation and protection. The curriculum is built around fish farming and environmental pollution problems as they affect farmers. The training programme begins with introductory fishing, fishing paraphernalia and equipment, and ends with the need for safety and correct use of fishing paraphernalia. Most adult learners attending the programme are interested in commercial fishing and pollution centered or prevention techniques (Adekoya, 1991). Although the impact of this programme is not yet articulated by many residents of riverine areas of Nigeria, considerations are underway at Shell, to involve a larger audience, the fisheries departments of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Nigerian Institute of Oceanography and Marine Research and the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Benin, Nigeria, in identifying those areas of concern to the adult learners regarding environmental pollution and conservation (Shell Petroleum, 1989).

### **Promoting adult literacy programmes with environmental education component**

To promote adult literacy and raise citizens' consciousness of environmental conservation ethics, the attempt must be made to in-

tegrate and balance the two traditions in curriculum theory and adult teaching: discipline and student centeredness (UNESCO, 1976). Information materials presented must attempt to answer three central questions:

1. What are the ecological and socio-cultural processes that underlie ecologically sustainable and socially just ways of organizing and managing people-environment relationships?
2. What role can community-based adult literacy programmes play in promoting sustainable development, and how can adult literacy programmes identify and relate to environmental pollution problems?
3. To what extent can adult trainers integrate the objective of environmental education into adult literacy lessons and how many adult learners are aware of the need to acquire knowledge of environmental systems and management? (Division of Australian Environmental Studies, 1990).

Adult literacy training with an environmental education component must aim at developing among adults: (i) an understanding of concepts and skills for studying and resolving environmental questions, issues and problems; (ii) an understanding of the causes of environmental problems, the value of a sustainable development and strategies for sustainable environmental management; and (iii) an understanding of the history, philosophy and objectives of environmental education (Fien, *ibid*). It is only when these and other objectives of adult literacy training are accomplished can we conclude that adult literacy training is serving the educational needs of the adults as a world's preserving inhabitant.

We recommend that the Directorate for Mass Education and the Directorate for Social Mobilisation who are interested in increasing the literacy rate among Nigerian adults adopt a policy that

recognises the fundamental importance of literacy programmes with a strong environmental education component. The recommendation is based on the following conclusions:

- Adult literacy training must not only cater for eradicating problems of illiteracy among adults but also pay attention to factors that may affect their health and welfare as beings.
- To promote adult literacy, information materials delivered to adults must be learner- and discipline-centered; the needs of the adult as a member of a community must be recognised in this task.
- To ensure the promotion, advocacy and development of popular literacy programmes, the rights of the illiterates to good health and clean surroundings, must be recognized and made an integral part of adult literacy programmes or curricula.

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*The Environment Conference of the United Nations takes place in June 1992 in Brasil. Additional information on the conference can be found in this volume. Siko Phiri wrote this article for The Spider, Newsletter of the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education, P.O. Box 50768, Nairobi, Kenya. It is a reprint from September 1991.*

**Seko Phiri**

## **UNCED: Development or window-dressing?**

UNCED, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development will take place from 1–12 June, 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The United Nations General Assembly in December 1989, formally resolved to convene this international conference also referred to as the »Earth Summit«.

Governments, NGOs, institutions and individuals have followed with interest the unfolding of events towards UNCED. As the events gather momentum, reactions to UNCED have varied from enthusiasm, »we must get involved and make our voice heard« to apathy, »this conference is nothing to get excited about — it is just another big world conference ... we have been raising issues for



decades without seeing any change ... when the dust settles down it will be back to business as usual».

Well, what will it be?

The Centre for Our Common Future, based in Geneva, organised the ECO '92 NGO Public Forum in Cairo, Egypt 9–10 July, 1991. Some of the issues raised by NGOs at the forum were:

- Africa's problems arise from poverty. It is therefore the root causes of poverty that need to be identified and resolved rather than the treatment of the symptoms.
- Africa's best land should be used to grow food to feed her starving population. The practice of using the best land for the production of cash crops for export should be discarded.

- Research on appropriate technology for Africa should be made a priority. This technology should be tested and applied in Africa before technology from industrialised nations is taken over wholesale. This will guard Africa from becoming the dumping ground of inferior and obsolete technologies.
- Steps and measures to improve the working environment of African professionals need to be taken to curb the brain drain to the North.
- In formulating action plans, alternatives must be given. For example, when women are told not to cut down trees, what alternative sources of energy are given?

Everyone agrees that the world is facing a major catastrophe unless drastic measures are taken to arrest it. What is interesting to note, however, are the differences in emphasis between the North's and Africa's view of the problem.

Whereas the North's preoccupation is with pollution, global warming/greenhouse effect and the depletion of the ozone layer; Africa's problems are more existential. They centre on desertification, drought, soil erosion, deforestation, population, toxic waste etc.

Africa is battling against insurmountable environmental odds; eg, inappropriate transnational bulk production of technologies which mean that African countries have to give up more ecological resources per unit of output, thus raising the resource costs of domestic production; extreme mass poverty and pervasive illiteracy in Africa. The poor are under pressure to exploit their environment (land, forest, water etc.) in a battle to stay alive. People who for centuries have looked after the environment suddenly find their backs to the wall as they struggle to put body and soul together. The failed Structural Adjustment Programmes have put

more pressure on an already economically overburdened people causing further environmental degradations.

As we move towards the Earth Summit, the North must prove its commitment to saving the world from disaster. While Africa will acknowledge its share of environmental degradation, the North must assume greater responsibility for revitalising the environment. This will of necessity mean a move from mere rhetorics to concrete programmes. The earth will not be conserved by a culture of exploitation and double standards but by the realisation that we are co-stewards of a delicate resource.

Hence, the test of the pudding is in the eating: is UNCED about development or is it window dressing?

#### **Building the African Environment Movement from the Grassroots**

This is the title of the Progress Report 1982 – 1990 published by the African NGOs Environment Network.

Contact: ANEN, P.O. Box 53844, Nairobi, Kenya.

#### **E & D File 1992**

Poverty and the Environment; and Land Degradation are the titles of numbers 17 and 18, August 1991. It is published by: *United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service, NGLS, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland.*

#### **Towards UNCED 92**

Under this heading the journal DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION 5/91, publishes more than 10 articles related to environment and global cooperation; the position of the North and the view of the South; resources in danger; and practical solutions. The journal is published by the *German Foundation for International Development, DSE, Rauchstr. 25, 1000 Berlin 30, Germany.*

*General and vocational education belong to the tasks of the Volkshochschulen in Germany. This also includes specialized training and degree courses. The following article illustrates how a Volkshochschule can adapt to changing environmental conditions and vocational demands. Hans-Peter Schweger is a pedagogical staff member of the Volkshochschule. Further information can be obtained from the Educational Centre for Environmental Protection at the Volkshochschule in Husum, attention Hans-Peter Schweger or Karen Hansen, under the following address: Theodor-Storm-Str. 2, D-2250 Husum.*

**Hans-Peter Schweger**

**Specialist for environmental protection**

**Environmental assistant — an example for further education**

Environmental Assistant is the title of a new profession, the profile of which has been designed by the *Volkshochschule* in Husum, a middle-sized community centre for further education in the northern part of Germany.

## Case history

The idea to create the position of specialist for environmental protection arose in 1982. Until then no such concept had existed, neither in the vocational education sector, nor on the level of continuing professional training, at least not below the purely scientific or scientific engineering level. The new profession was designed with the double intention of lending new impetus to environmental control and its application, and of influencing the labour market to create new additional employment opportunities. At this time (during the early to mid 80's) there was an unemployment rate in some areas of northern Germany of up to 20%.

In 1985, after an intensive three-year period of preparation — countless consultations and conferences with representatives of industry, trade unions, the political scene, chambers and environmentalist groups — the idea became reality when the competent Chamber of Industry and Commerce issued a federally recognized statute. Based on an analysis of demand, provision was made for a one-year, full-time training programme with a finishing examination accredited by the Chamber of Commerce to supplement an already completed course of vocational training. Qualifications either in electrical engineering, metallurgy, agriculture, chemistry, biology or physics were made prerequisite to enrollment, with a minimum requirement of four and a half years of professional training and experience.

Parallel to the legislative process, a comprehensive teaching plan or syllabus was drawn up. Funds were raised, and the necessary classrooms were organized and properly equipped. In May 1985, once a qualified team of instructors had been found (biologists, chemists, engineers and qualified teachers), the initial training period was launched. Participants came mainly from the northern part of Germany, but also from other parts of the Federal Republic.

Since then considerably more than 100 environmental assistants have qualified for the labour market, and, for the most part (80%), have succeeded in finding employment in the field of environmental control and protection.

## **Job description**

The environmental assistant is able to serve as a specialist for or an employee of community agencies, industry, research or concerned associations. He is qualified to assist in technically sophisticated laboratory and analysis processes, to lay the groundwork for decision-making and approval procedures, to collect biological and ecological data required for decision or map-making, to set up and operate measuring sites for testing environmentally relevant parameters, to compile and work with measurements and analytic data.

Should the size of an undertaking be too small to employ someone full-time exclusively for questions relating to environmental protection, the double qualification aspect (professional background plus environmental specialization) may provide an alternative.

## **Course description**

The training programme provides for 35 hours of weekly instruction for the duration of twelve months.

Instruction takes place part-time in the field at potential work sites where emphasis is placed on quick analysis, proper sampling techniques and recording procedures. The following skills and areas of knowledge constitute the essential components of the curriculum:

1. Measuring conservationally relevant physical, chemical and biological quantities
2. Proper taking, conserving, storing and shipping of samples
3. Conducting preliminary chemical analyses
4. Evaluating measurements and analytic data in incidents of environmental pollution to expedite their limitation
5. Documenting and recording samples, measurements and analyses
6. Assisting in surveying and charting ecological and biological data
7. Advising on practical conservation questions
8. Learning the relevant environmental legislation
9. Learning the fundamentals of supply and disposal of wastes
10. Mastering protective work and health measures
11. Care and maintenance of instruments and equipment.

These skills and knowledge are taught in corresponding courses (cf. syllabus), whereby it is to be noted that the content is presented in a highly interdisciplinary manner. Only in this way can participants acquire the interwoven outlook indispensable for meeting the tasks of environmental control.

## **SYLLABUS**

**General and Inorganic Chemistry**  
**Organic Chemistry**

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**General Biology / Ecology**  
**Limnology**  
**Biotope Cartography**

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**General Environmental Conservation**  
**Environmental Law / Management**

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**Technology of Pollution Measurement**  
**Water**  
**Soil**  
**(Air)**  
**(Noise)**

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**Basics of Electrotechnology / Electronics**  
**Metrology and Automatic Control Technology**  
**Processing and Presentation of Measurement Data**

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**Basics of Supply and Disposal**  
**Water Supply**  
**Sewage Disposal**  
**Solid Waste Disposal**

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**Basics of Radiology**  
**Basics of Toxicology and Work Security**

## Perspectives and demand

Industrial concerns are being increasingly confronted with problems of an environmental nature. Legislators have meanwhile issued a profusion of environmental regulations. Further regulatory legislation will follow.

Workers with pertinent knowledge in the field will be needed for environmental control to supervise the enforcement of the many regulations and laws on an internal industrial level as well as on the community level. The demand will grow for workers beneath the scientific or engineering level for reasons of cost. There is a demand for specialists in the field of environmental protection, and this not only applies to industrialized countries, but just as certainly to the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.



*Against the background of political, economic, social and cultural crises in Africa, representatives of African NGOs in the areas of adult education and environment met for talks. The East and Central Africa Regional Consultation on People's Participation in Environmental Sustainable Development was held at Kunste Hotel, Nakuru, Kenya from 25 - 29 June 1990. It was jointly organised by AALAE, ANEN and ELCI.*

## **Nakuru blueprint for participatory, democracy and sustainable development**

### **Background**

In December 1988, at an international NGO conference on the environment organised by the ELCI in Tabarka, Tunisia, a group of concerned individuals held a consultation on the deteriorating state of the environment. As a direct result of this consultation, and to broaden concern and dialogue on the state of the environment as a basis for positive action, an inter-regional (comprising the regions of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, North America and Europe), consultation followed in Manila in June 1989. The Manila consultation identified the present international economic system and development model as the principal cause

of the deteriorating environment. Within countries, this system places resources and power in the hands of a few; and between countries concentrates it in a handful of countries which control the resources of the entire world, for private benefit. This type of development is unsustainable at all levels: political, economic, social, cultural, moral and at the level of the resources base. It actually threatens the very survival of humankind.

Only sustainable development, development which caters for the needs of today's generation without compromising the ability of future generations to use the same resource base, can save humankind from the impending catastrophe. Such development, named sustainable development, can only be possible if it is people-based, with people's popular participation. The Manila Consultation identified several issues and concerns which need to be addressed and concretised further at the sub-regional, national and local levels, if people's participation in environmentally sustainable development is to become reality.

The Eastern and Central African sub-regional consultation on environmentally sustainable development was accordingly convened to discuss the current environment and development problems in the sub-region, share experiences, and strategise on how sustainable development with popular participation could be achieved. The consultation sought to build on earlier thinking on sustainable development and explore ways and means of turning earlier ideas and their own ideas into sub-regional, national and local-level action.

## **The African crisis**

The meeting recognized that the African crisis has a long history dating back to the Roman conquest of North Africa, but more recently to the slave trade, colonial domination and the current

period of neo-colonial domination and exploitation of the African natural resource base and her people, culminating in the \$250 billion dollar debt, hunger, drought, civil wars, refugees and general deterioration of the human condition of the majority of the African people.

In order to resolve this crisis, the following must be undertaken:

- struggle for change towards democratic rule in Africa; the present undemocratic governments are not conducive to sustainable economic reforms;
- struggle to empower communities, societies and nations in order to bring about a new international democratic order where Africa will be in control of its economy and resources;
- ensure equitable land distribution among the peasants who produce the bulk of Africa's agricultural products;
- NGOs to be in the forefront of the struggle to enable people at grassroots regain their confidence and self-respect;
- work towards decentralization of power and decision-making processes;
- struggle to improve overall quality of life of the African people who are demoralized and lack self-confidence;
- build alliances locally, nationally and regionally to create a new Pan-Africanism, and link up internationally with democratic forces who support sustainable development and popular participation in Africa and globally;
- a new type of objective communication which will focus on issues and disseminate information which affect the majority of African people.

## **Popular participation and sustainable development**

The meeting observed that sustainability and popular participation are two aspects of sustainable development.

Sustainability means oneness between humans and nature; it includes respect for life, communities, culture and societal assets to ensure continuity and security of people's livelihood and well-being as for future generations.

### **Who are the people**

By people, we mean all those sectors of society whose social welfare and social progress are impeded by the present international economic and undemocratic order. These include the poor peasants, workers, patriotic national businessmen, patriotic professional bodies, progressive patriotic intellectuals and oppressed nationalities.

People's participation is a self-initiated and sustained mode of social organization and co-operation adopted by a social group in the process of satisfying human need of personal, community and environmental dimensions.

### **Necessary conditions for popular participation**

In order to bring about sustainability, popular participation:

- should be voluntary, at all stages of development
- should be self-initiated and endogenous
- should educate and facilitate critical awareness

- must operate in a democratic atmosphere permitting free expression, organization, and movement
- must recognize that sovereignty resides with the people
- must empower people and give them self-respect
- enable people to hold ownership and control over their resources and activities
- guarantee informed freedom to choose between alternatives, including the right to say no
- guarantee people's culture and other social assets
- must educate and conscientize people for self-management and control of their resources
- guarantee unimpeded dialogue and continuing communication among all sectors of society to ensure protection of majority concerns, welfare and basic human rights.

## **The Role of NGOs, VDOs and community groups in sustainable development**

The meeting noted that with the growing abandonment by the African governments of social welfare services and subsidies (e.g. health, education, agricultural inputs etc.), »cost sharing«, increased taxation, frozen wages, manipulated falling commodity prices, inflation, etc., the burden of survival had increased tremendously. To survive, the people have responded by reorganising themselves to cater for their material and spiritual welfare. This fact has been reflected in the phenomenal growth of community and citizen groups and organisations. At other levels there has been the

dramatic growth of voluntary development organisations (VDOs) and non-government organisations (NGOs). In addition to all this, there has been the growing tide of expatriate NGOs (ENGOS) which have opened offices on the continent and are engaged in action among the people, down to the lowest level.

The meeting noted further that the work of community and citizen groups and organisations, VDOs, NGOs and the influx of ENGOS now constituted a battleground between the people and imperialism. Directly and through organised groups, VDOs and NGOs, the people are seeking some free space and the right to control and manage Africa's resources, as well as determine their destiny. The objective of imperialism has been to broaden and consolidate its domination of the African peoples. Imperialism's methods have included intensified ideological bombardment, providing ideological leadership, gaining direct access to the people and organising them, as well as co-opting and corrupting some of the leadership of the community groups, NGOs and VDOs.

The meeting urged the leadership of VDOs and NGOs to be conscious of the above reality. It was also noted that only the people through organised action could redeem themselves and humankind from the ravages and possible calamity of reckless exploitation. In this, the VDOs and NGOs should play an intermediary role of providing support to community and citizen groups and organisations to strengthen themselves so as to undertake independent action, delink from export-focused economies and build self-reliant economies based on the people's needs and aspirations.

To this extent, the meeting recommended that VDOs and NGOs further:

- (i) Base all their work on the resources available to the people, their expertise, existing institutions and culture.

- (ii) Avoid being compradorized.
- (iii) Facilitate people's efforts.
- (iv) Articulate a broad political framework and code of ethics to guide their internal operations and their work with community groups and people's organisations; as well as their relations with the South ENGOs and the North.
- (v) Ensure the highest levels of accountability, starting with the people.

### **Networking, cooperation and solidarity among VDOs, NGOs and community groups**

The meeting noted that the struggle for popular participation and sustainable development was a struggle against highly organised, coordinated and powerful forces. It was therefore necessary for the VDOs, NGOs and community groups and people's organisations to strike the broadest alliances and networks. This was particularly important to build momentum and impact, as well as generate the strength and power of complimentarity and comparative advantage. Networking should be for empowerment and therefore not bureaucratic.

Networking and exchange should take into account the following levels:

- the policy level
- the technical level
- the people-to-people level.

## National and local development: Criteria for sustainability

The meeting noted that in order to be sustainable, projects should:

- be decided upon by the people and respond to the following criteria: who initiates, who decides, who participates, who benefits and who controls. If the answer is »the people« to all these five criteria, then it could be said that the project is sustainable;
- meet the basic needs of the people;
- address the needs of marginalized communities such as pastoralists, fishermen, and forest dwellers;
- be targeted at improving the environment, eg.g. soil conservation, re-afforestation, genetic resources conservation, etc.;
- be income-generating;
- focus on rehabilitation of people displaced by war, famine, drought, etc.;
- contain environmental education and training components.

It was further recommended that NGOs should focus their activities at the most vital sectors of society, especially the poor, women, youth and ensure that projects address such issues as increased production, agriculture, health, water and energy. Furthermore, NGOs must act as facilitators and ensure that enough local people are trained to take on responsibility once external expertise has been withdrawn.

The meeting further noted that there are several constraints in the realization of sustainable programmes. These include: illiteracy,

lack of trained people, poor communication, lack of markets for projects outputs, and methodology of NGOs which sometimes result in failure to get through to the government authorities. It was recommended that NGO programmes should address these and other constraints if their grassroots projects are to succeed.

The meeting also noted that successful sustainable programmes are those where there is minimum bureaucracy and government interference, and where local expertise and resources are utilized to the maximum, and people are able to share their successes with the neighbours, thus ensuring replicability of programmes.

## **Empowerment of women**

The meeting noted that whereas women constitute more than one-half of Africa's population, produce the bulk of food and other agricultural produce, take overall responsibility of raising and caring for families, fetching water and cooking fuel, yet they enjoy but few rights. Women throughout the region have several disadvantages as opposed to their male counterparts. They work harder, sleep fewer hours, receive lower salaries for equal work, and very few countries (if any) practised equality of women before the law.

Given the above, it was observed that there are critical issues for environmental sustainability which include:

- Empowerment of women so that they can become equal partners in development. This cannot happen until their legal status has been improved, leading to a cessation of abuse, exploitation and anonymity of their contribution.
- Access and control of resources, especially land, money and technology.

- Give more time to women for self-improvement and empowerment by involving husbands and boys in housekeeping and other agricultural chores.
- Involve women in decision-making at all levels.
- Reduce illiteracy and provide more opportunities for girls and women's education and to conscientize them to environmental issues.
- Ensure single mothers' rights are protected and observed.
- Train and educate women community leaders. All education should include environmental components.

It was observed further that although much had been achieved as a result of the Women's Decade, at least in theory, the condition of women, in most African countries had worsened, especially the poorest women in the rural areas and urban slums.

In light of the above, it was recommended that NGOs should design programmes which meet the welfare needs of communities, e.g. water, health, education, family welfare etc. It was noted further that empowerment is a process consisting of five interrelated and integrated steps. These are: welfare; access to information, equipment and means of production; conscientization, i.e. skills for analysis, questioning, etc.; participation, i.e. to initiate, to decide, to participate, to benefit; and control of the resources and means of production.

### **Towards participatory communication**

In reviewing the role of communication methods in popular participation and sustainable development, the meeting recognized

that communication remains a powerful and yet elusive force for social change.

The meeting noted that most channels of communication are still owned, controlled and managed by the minority ruling and economic interest which in turn control the social systems and power structures that shape the destiny of all humankind.

The meeting further noted that despite their past and present efforts in fighting for social justice, communication methods do carry with them inherent contradiction, and hence fall short of the challenges posed by the agenda today, namely, that of promoting popular participation and sustainable development.

The meeting therefore recommends, *inter alia*:

- That deliberate and concerted efforts should be taken immediately to facilitate an appropriate design, establishment and management of participatory communication methods.
- That such communication methods cover the widest range of issues but should, as a matter of policy, shift attention from establishment news makers to alternative social actors — the poor and the disadvantaged.
- That, in order to empower grassroots and community groups for effective participation in matters affecting their lives, efforts should be made to build and develop within and among those groups both technical and human resources in collecting, storing and disseminating public information.
- That, in order to bring about a truly participatory communication process, communicators need an appropriate political orientation so that they articulate and reflect what it means to be truly human. This, in turn, calls for better journalism curricula.

- That NGOs, as intermediaries between grassroots and community groups, on the one hand, and policy makers and politicians, on the other, should explore possibilities and strategies for launching information foundations and trusts in the service of sustainable development.
- That, in order for these foundations and trusts to function effectively, development and environment editors of newsletters and magazines run by NGOs and VDOs should form national and/or regional professional associations to further the ideals for, and the practice of, participatory communication.
- In order to make communication truly participatory, the meeting recognized the need for political orientation and advocacy. This calls for a change in perception of those who now stand to gain from the present undemocratic social systems and power structures at national, regional and international levels.

## **Towards the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)**

1992 comes 20 years after the UN Conference on Human Environment was held in Stockholm. This occasion will be marked by another UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) to be held in Brazil in June 1992.

It was observed that the 1992 Conference provides an opportunity for African citizens to articulate their concerns and aspirations on environment and development issues affecting them. The participants felt that it is time NGOs and community groups in Africa lobbied for their own agenda at international platforms such as UNCED. In order to have the maximum impact, the participants appealed to all the developing nations, NGOs and community groups

to work resolutely towards the formation of a united front at the 1992 UNCED.

This requires a bottom-up process of open-ended consultation on sustainable development, and the participants agreed to promote this process through national-level consultations. It was reported that such a process has already started in Southern Africa and is in the planning stage in Northern Africa and Indian-Ocean island countries. Participants from Central African Republic, Burundi, Kenya and Mauritius also reported on specific plans to held national-level consultations in their own countries.

The participants agreed that the reports from these consultations should form the basis for providing inputs into the national governmental reports, which are to be submitted to the UNCED Secretariat. ELCI also announced that the reports from all the consultations will lead into a »Brazil Document« to be presented by NGOs to the UNCED. The first draft of this document will be discussed at the 1991 NGO Conference to be organised by ELCI which will facilitate NGO inputs into the preparatory process for the UNCED.

The three co-organisers of the consultation, AALAE, ELCI and ANEN, agreed to work together and provide all support in promoting the national consultations in Africa.

#### **The '92 Global Forum**

A series of simultaneous events which provides an opportunity for all sectors to express their independent views at the time of the earth summit is already in an advanced planning stage.

*Contact: The '92 Global Forum. Hotel Glória, Predio Anexo, Sala 366, 22212 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.*



*Harsh reality continues: the North is becoming richer and the South poorer. Prof. Hauchler therefore argues for a complete change in the relationship between the North and the South. He is a member of the German Parliament and chairman for development policies of the Social Democratic Party. The article is a reprint from epd Entwicklungspolitik 7/91 (March).*

**Ingomar Hauchler**

## **Towards a fundamental change in North-South relations**

It does not suffice in most areas of international politics to simply follow the strategies of former years. Population explosion, the impending climate catastrophe, spreading zones of hunger and poverty, rural exodus and migration pressure, the debt crisis and development blockade, deinvestment in many third-world countries as well as uncontained environmental destruction are only a few of the key issues which constitute growing global problems. It is imperative for policy-makers today to recognize what the real problems are, and to set the right priorities. In this vein I propose the following theses. Only if we succeed in fundamentally revising

the policy of development and set new priorities will we be able to deal peaceably and durably with relations between North and South and avoid global catastrophes.

### **Thesis No. 1**

**The policy of development, which until now has primarily been concerned with material growth and economic balance, will progressively become the decisive factor in security and peace.**

If we intend to secure peace, we will have to think more and more beyond the categories of military and political force. The peace and security debate, which hitherto has concentrated on armament and deterrence, or disarmament and security, will have to be amplified. As far as the perspective of global peace policy is concerned, it will have to examine new dimensions in global threats: Today many more people die of hunger than by military force. Considering stagnating development and the population explosion, this socioeconomic dimension of global strategies for security encompasses growing numbers of people in third world countries.

Another factor is the ecological dimension of global security. The war being waged against nature will take a growing toll on human life unless economy and technology are soon effectively reoriented. This dimension of security applies not only to the southern hemisphere. The earth's atmosphere and its ozone layer, water and radioactivity transgress boundaries and continents both North and South.

The ecological aspects of security interact with socioeconomic aspects. Growing poverty hastens destruction of nature directly and indirectly through accelerated population growth. Likewise, the depletion of natural resources and the destruction of natural

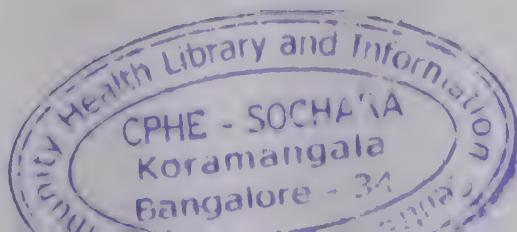
means of subsistence hasten the growth of poverty. The result is a fatal cycle which poses an imminent threat primarily to the South, but moves on with an increasingly severe effect to the North. Poverty and environmental destruction by themselves pose mutually aggravating security risks. Beyond that, they can increasingly become the cause of mass migration, which in turn triggers new poverty and environmental destruction. This »migration of poverty« produced by unequal development and inequality of chances in life can reach a degree that increases the liability for military conflict. In an age marked by military technology it is likely for regional conflicts in the third world to have farther-reaching consequences.

Unless the fatal cycle of population growth, poverty and environmental destruction can be interrupted by development, global security will remain in jeopardy. Consequently, policy for development is policy for security in our own interest and in that of peace.

## Thesis No. 2

**Until now development policy has been based on the concept of »catching up«: development in the southern hemisphere being defined in terms of duplication, imitation, or a matching of development in the northern hemisphere. We must recognize that this cannot succeed without rupturing the ecological foundations of the earth. The North instead must enter a global dialogue with the South to determine how, within an ecological context, to support a stronger autonomous development of developing countries.**

It is clear that a simple »opening up« of the South to the North is unrealistic economically and without ecological justification. In twenty years the populations of India and China will reach 1.5 billion each. Is it ecologically feasible to imagine those multitudes



using as much energy, driving as many cars and consuming the same amount of products?

It is proving to be increasingly unrealistic to assume that a »short cut procedure« can make it economically possible within only a few decades to bring developing countries up to a level of affluence achieved by industrial countries only after centuries.

Autonomous development today no longer means national seclusion (along the line of discussion in the sixties and seventies). It rather signifies efforts to strengthen the development of domestic markets, to build up regional cooperation, to work at internal reform, instead of continually renewing strategies that have failed.

From the start, new directions must be taken in the South at a stage of development significantly earlier than in the North in order to avoid conflict between economy and ecology: in manufacturing, in the use of energy, in the development of transportation — and likewise in the development of production and marketing.

In its own self-interest, the North must lend massive support to the process of a new and different growth: through ecological expertise and ongoing, large scale advisory assistance, through massive transfer of the latest technology, by waiving exports and imports inclined to destroy the South's environment, by setting ecological conditions for direct investments and credits, by making capital transfers to help finance the higher costs of a new »clean growth«.

It would be entirely too much to expect the South to finance economic growth by itself from the outset — and to the advantage of the North as well — under ecological considerations. On the other hand, the South, and particularly its elite, must also be prepared to make greater contributions in order to help pave the way to a lasting growth compatible both socially and ecologically.

### Thesis No. 3

**International economic and development policies hitherto have proceeded on the assumption that the gap between industrial and developing countries would eventually close with increasing international division of labor. This has not proven to be true. World trade has grown more than global production. There has been a simultaneous widening of the gap between industrial and developing countries.**

What is the reason? For one thing, conditions have been set so as to unilaterally favour industrial countries. For decades the industrial countries have been pleading to do away with protectionism, and are now preventing the GATT negotiations from succeeding. The same countries which support protectionist measures in important areas of the agricultural and industrial sectors are demanding greater export efforts from developing countries to reduce their debt.

Secondly, the starting point for competition between developing and industrial countries is not the same. The structures of world trade even during the colonial period were fixed so as to prevent the rise of regionally interacting economic forces. Instead, trade flowed unilaterally from North to South. A one-sided policy focusing on external markets was often forced for centuries, for example through single-crop agriculture and concentration on export of raw materials. The processing sector was neglected within developing countries and traditional skills and trades were systematically eradicated.

Colonial and imperial dominance of the North, as well as unequal starting points and unfair world market conditions have prevented the closing of the gap between industrial and developing countries.

## Thesis No. 4

Development policies hitherto were primarily aimed at bringing about change in the third world. We have to recognize that in a world of growing global interdependence, development policy must also pay increasing attention to the global effect of our own actions, lifestyle and modes of production. Consequently, we, the people of the industrial countries, must also submit ourselves to change! This may be the single most significant contribution to development policy of the future.

This dimension of development policy, which over the past years has drawn a growing amount of closer attention, must finally lead to concrete political change in the North. We cannot expect only developing countries to alter their behavior, when it is our doing that has such a massive and negative global impact — whether it be through our modes of production, our excessive use of energy, or our habits of consumption. We have got to finally stop wasting resources, so that developing countries can have access to a fair share of those still remaining. The affluent countries of the North must become more moderate in order to allow the growing population of the South to satisfy their basic needs.

## Thesis No. 5

Gross national product, the single most important factor in judging economic growth, has been, and for the most part continues to be, the yardstick for measuring development. Economic growth is still held to be tantamount to progress and development. The concept of development through worldwide growth perpetuated indefinitely into the future, in which the industrial countries play the part of the engine, will prove fatal in the long run. We must redefine development.

Until now it has been expected that the solution to all economic and social problems lies in the highest possible growth rate in industrial countries. Growth in the North was supposed to kindle economic activity in the South through a high degree of international division of labour. The industrial countries as »engine« were supposed to pull the train of developing countries.

This remains the unaltered dogma of prevailing development strategies. In other words: Growth in industrial countries is supposed to increase the demand for products, including products from the South. This is then supposed to lead to an increase in exports from the South and through the »trickle-down-effect« to boost the internal economic development of developing nations.

This also calls for a reevaluation. We cannot continue to consider the use of resources and nature simply as an automatic reflex of individual needs and purchasing-power, as held in theory hitherto in the history of economics. Instead, we must first of all succeed in determining the »base supply« of global resources necessary (for a determined level of technology) to continually satisfy the basic needs of a growing world population. Taking this as our starting point, we must then deduce the maximum volume of resources which can be consumed, and the limit to which the environment can be justifiably burdened. The resulting maximum of viable production will then determine the latitude available for satisfying continual needs.

Such considerations have nothing to do with planned and government-directed economy. What is concerned here is a binding economic framework within which the economic subjects are free to decide in matters of production and consumption. The basic law of economic activity which applies to individual businesses and to each and every household, namely, that in the long run costs (resources) cannot exceed profits (consumption), also applies to economic and ecological balance and to the world as a whole.

## »PARTICIPATORY« DEVELOPMENT



What the experts proposed



The final compromise design agreed



What the government department specified



The system actually installed



The design after review  
by an advisory committee



What the people really wanted

*In a note to the editor which accompanied her open letter Usa Duongsaa mentioned: »And please kindly let me know people's reactions and response to it!« If readers want to contact her directly, please write to Usa Duongsaa, Chinag Mai, Provincial Centre for NFE, MAE RIM District, Chiang Mai 50180, Thailand.*

**Usa Duongsaa**

## **An open letter to all adult educators**

My dear adult educators,  
What are you doing  
When the world is smouldering with the fire of war  
    with a build-up of armaments which can destroy the world  
    many times over  
And when the world's fate is decided by only a handful  
    of people  
What are you doing  
When human rights and freedom are abused  
    as the power of the people is snatched away by some self-  
    proclaimed leaders.

What are you doing

When the ozone layer is being depleted, bit by bit, hole by hole

And the forests are cleared, tree by tree, forest by forest

Making the world hot and the land dry

What are you doing

When the world is filled with cigarette smoke

Rotten and smelly litter strewn here and there and everywhere

And thick black exhaust fumes lingering on the road, car after car

So the air becomes polluted, just like the water

What are you doing

When lush forest reserves are turned into an exclusive golf course

or a luxury tourist resort

Fertile land becomes a housing estate

or is flooded over into a dam area

And natural resources — the forests, species of wild flora and fauna,

watershedss, mountains, beach, sea, and corals —

Are scarcely left for future generations to appreciate, study and conserve.

What are you doing

When AIDS is spreading like wild fire, from one person to another, from one sector to another

And alcohol, amphetamines, sleeping pills, anti-depressants and drugs

become the sixth major food group for some people

What are you doing

When vegetables and fruits are laced with pesticides

Chicken and pork are full of growth hormones

Seafood is soaked in formalene, instead of ice, for freshness and crispness

And dry foods are tainted with artificial colours and flavours, carcinogenic preservatives and additives

Until even **you** don't know what is safe to eat anymore.

What are you doing

When parents pressurize their young daughters to sell their bodies

to a thousand men just for the sake of a pick-up truck,  
a video-recorder, or building material for a new house

And a large number of children become enslaved  
threatened, tortured, and overworked  
in exchange for a day's meagre meals

What are you doing

When farmers who toil in the ricefields have to buy rice to eat,  
Rural folks have to migrate to become cheap labour in the cities,  
Hilltribes are brought to perform their traditional New Year Dance  
to entertain paying tourists, 365 days a year

And slum-dwellers are forced out of their makeshift shelters  
with nowhere to go

What are you doing

When condominiums tower high over temple tops  
Prostitutes outnumber monks  
And power, authority and money are revered more than virtues.

What are you doing?

My dear adult educators

Are you waiting to see how much this year's budget will be?

Are you waiting for the policies to be formulated?

Are you waiting to see who will be your new boss?

Are you waiting for motivation, rewards, or other morale boosters  
before you will finally get down to doing something?

My dear adult educators

Until when will you wait?

Until when will you close your ears, your eyes, your thoughts —  
and your hearts?

Don't you know that the world simply cannot wait?

And neither can people's problems

The longer you wait, the more damage is done  
to the world and its people.

When the environment is destroyed  
When humanity is extinct  
When rural areas become cemeteries, and the cities become hell  
Who will participate in the vocational training that you organize?  
Who will come to read at the village reading centres that you set up?  
Who will listen to radio lessons that you broadcast?  
Who will become adult learners for your many teachers to teach?  
And what will you be doing yourselves?

My dear adult educators  
Do you know that you have the power, the potential?  
Do you know that you carry many people's hopes?  
If only you will open your eyes to see, open your ears to hear,  
    open wide your thoughts and your hearts  
You will know just how far the world has turned  
    just what problems we are facing  
    and just what is to be done  
Then you will realize that these are your responsibilities,  
And this is what adult education is all about.

My dear adult educators  
Do you know that you have the power, the potential?  
Do you know that you carry many people's hopes?  
If only you will stretch out your hand  
    to reach and hold the hands of the many  
    people and organizations surrounding you and waiting for you  
If only you will take a step forward  
    to listen, to learn, to act on problems  
Then there may still be a tomorrow for all of us.

*An information and educational campaign is presently being compiled by broadcasting networks and environmental, Third World, peace and educational organisations. Films to be screened on television in Europe and teaching material are in preparation. The basic political document printed here reflects the common message of the organizations involved. Contact address: »One World«/Eine Welt für Alle, Geschäftsstelle, Tieckstraße 7, 5000 Köln 30, Germany.*

## **One World — Basic Document**

The project »One World« is supported by 33 private organizations of cooperation for development and environmental conservation in Germany.

In 1989 they joined forces to synchronize an information campaign of their own with the 1990 »One World« programme accent of the German television network ARD.

Phase II of the project, now in preparation, will take place in May and June of 1992. The project is closely connected in timing and topic with the UN Conference »Environment and Development« (UNCED) which is scheduled to take place from the 1st to the 12th of June, 1992, in Rio de Janeiro. Once again, separate initiatives

and actions will be conducted in connection with the relevant programme accent of television and other media, the main points and impulse direction of which have been set down in the following basic political document.

## Introduction

The large majority of Germans can say that they are materially well off: most of us have a sound income, a nice home, an automobile parked outside the door, occasional holiday trips and the many small comforts that make daily life easier.

There is a reverse side to this fair picture: the large number of those among us who are unemployed and poor, drug addicts and mentally ill, the almost daily reports on global warming, the ozone hole, destruction of rain forests and poverty in Africa, Asia and Latin America. We would very much like to believe that we have all problems under perfect control with our social system, with environmental conservation and development aid.

There is concrete reason to doubt this in the billion people who live in absolute poverty and the ongoing degradation of the ecological base of our planet.

Many people are asking themselves how things can and should go on. The problems are complex. There are no simple solutions. The diverse goals are often conflicting. A change in lifestyle in the private sphere will be necessary on an individual scale. Without political and social change, however, there will be no fundamental change.

The project »One World« undertakes to enlighten, to point out connections, and to motivate action. Its efforts are devoted to the same

topic as the aforementioned upcoming UN Earth Summit in Brazil (UNCED).

It is true that such a conference can only set things in motion gradually. Nevertheless, we hope it will provide significant impetus for new ways of thinking and concrete treaties to call a halt to the progressive devastation of the environment. We also hope that in the course of the Conference the peoples of the community will further their talks on ways of development which favour survival today and for future generations. It is all too apparent that global problems can no longer be solved by individual nations alone. The project »One World« intends to actively participate in the preparatory phase of UNCED, and to emphasize its appeal to devote attention in like measure to conservation efforts and the war on poverty, and for the relevant definition of a convincing German contribution.

In this basic document the broad topic »Environment and Development« is dealt with under four separate headings (Energy and Transportation, Nutrition, Wastes, Rain Forests), which are broken down into different levels of action. In this connection, problem areas were selected on the one hand to illustrate the interrelatedness of surplus, poverty and destruction of the natural life base, and on the other to drive the message so close to home that we do not stop at dismay, but go on to recognize concrete lines of action. For the present, the initiators of »One World« want to restrict their attention to these areas without implying disregard for topics like education, health or population growth.

A sectoral approach to thinking and acting has practical operative advantages. It is wise to take steps which are evident and feasible, even if they only point out the beginning of the solution. To become resigned in face of the size and complexity of the challenges is no alternative. As stated in the new report submitted to the Club of Rome, »The First Global Revolution«, »thousands of small and wise

decisions ... will be necessary in order to ensure the survival of society«.

The many small steps must not be allowed to cover up the global perspective. Regardless of the answers and the seriousness of their implications, we must face the question whether we truly can and want to go on living a lifestyle which we know in our hearts is making the earth ever more desolate so as to prevent the majority of mankind from even the most modest means of living.

It is a widespread view that the developed countries cannot permanently sustain their model of growth because even now the environmental consequences are too crucial, and because the universal transfer of such a model would result in a world-wide ecological collapse. This creates social inequities between North and South which disrupt or even destroy peace with an inevitable backlash on the islands of affluence, e.g. through tides of immigration prompted by poverty. Our model of growth does indeed burden coming generations with a heavy mortgage. Standards of consumption as we practice them cannot be maintained.

Considering that ecological ruin would result from world-wide duplication of industrialized patterns of production and consumption, and that, at the same time, a division of the world into categories of »haves« and »have nots« cannot be tolerated for reasons of ethics and self-interest, we must ask what the consequences are, for ourselves in particular.

We are not speaking here of stagnation or zero-growth strategies. Growth must rather be fashioned so that weak economies also have access to development opportunities, and so that we can free ourselves from the clutches of our »ever more, better and faster« mentality. Only such categories of growth can be tolerated in the long run that make the viability and integrity of the whole contingent upon the viability and integrity of the individual parts and

subsystems. Growth of this nature will necessitate changes in our society, changes compatible with ecology and with humanity, and not just in developing countries, but also particularly in industrial countries. This is crux of the domestic political challenge in environment and development work.

Our involvement, our consumer behaviour, our lifestyle and our electoral decisions can and must contribute to making that change. For us, too, this does not necessarily just mean inconvenience and doing without. It can also mean an increase in our quality of life.

Admittedly, such considerations are not popular. They touch us at the core and are frightening to many. We have become too accustomed to what we have. However, we will only win in the long run if we begin to make adjustments now.

The process of shaping the future responsibly must involve many people. Mutual encouragement and support are required. Social consciousness must be created on a level that can no longer be ignored by the political scene. The project »One World« intends to join the relevant media initiatives in making a contribution, in providing a forum and in creating impulses.

## **Energy and transportation**

Our system of production and consumption is marked by a high use of energy. Although barely one third (30 per cent) of the world's population lives in industrialized countries, this third accounts for 80 per cent of the consumption of fossil resources, i.e. oil, gas or coal. Statistically speaking, the per capita consumption of energy in Germany averages 21 times that of per capita consumption in India.

This high rate of energy use contributes significantly to the so-called greenhouse effect. The burning of fossil fuels throws off billions of tons of carbon dioxide and other climate-damaging gases into the earth's atmosphere. These gases absorb the sunlight that hits the earth, so that not enough heat is radiated back.

Although the full scope of effects cannot as yet be foreseen, an increase in global warming is inevitable. This warming is held to be the most hazardous and most critical ecological challenge ever to face mankind.

The industrialized nations with their high rates of energy consumption are the main cause of the greenhouse effect. Industrial smokestacks, power plants, heating furnaces and automobiles in the North account for nearly 75 per cent of carbon dioxide emissions, the major contributor to global warming. Similar figures apply to the production and consumption of chlorofluorocarbons, or CFCs, which destroy the earth's ozone shield. The thinning filter of solar radiation poses a considerable threat to all forms of life. Approximately a million tons of CFCs are produced world-wide, and 90 per cent thereof are manufactured in industrialized countries. Although the problem has long been recognized, it still has not been possible to impose a ban on the production of CFCs in many countries including the Federal Republic of Germany.

The shift in climate will affect everyone. The particularly vulnerable victims, however, will be the people of the South, who have never had much influence in protecting themselves from detrimental developments. The »life boats« are not equally distributed. The wealthy, particularly the industrialized nations of the North, have recourse to funds for precautionary measures (like dikes and storm screens, medical prevention, and food banks), while the poor have recourse only to themselves. Who, e.g. offers to protect or evacuate the more than 80 million inhabitants of the severely flood-prone

regions of Bangladesh? Who offers to help the »environmental refugees« of Africa, those millions of people driven from their ancestral homes each year because of spreading deserts or soil erosion?

Because industrialized countries use such exorbitant quantities of energy, and because they are the primary culprits of environmental contamination, it is up to them to begin with energy conservation and contamination control, and to make the major contribution. Significant cut-backs are required to counter the high level of consumption in countries like the Federal Republic of Germany. A balance must be reached between the demands of the industrialized nations and the developmental needs of the countries of the South in order to reduce environmental destruction and to decrease the potential for hazards.

### **What can I do as an individual?**

- Be consequent in saving energy. A substantial part of our energy is futile waste, e.g. overheating, insufficient indoor insulation etc.
- Homeowners and landlords, perhaps at the initiative of their tenants, can substantially contribute to the conservation of energy through improved heating systems, more efficient boilers, supplementary insulation measures, etc.
- Intelligent use of automobiles. This includes the decision only to drive when absolutely necessary, and where possible to go by train, bus or bicycle. Models for sharing car ownership should be studied, car-pools should be formed. In making purchases, prospective car-buyers should check for environmental features, which are actually self-evident today, like fuel economy, catalytic converters, recycling potential of body parts etc.

- Avoid chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). Atomizers with CFCs are superfluous, and can be replaced by alternatives like mechanical spray devices. Refrigerators and freezers etc., too, are available today free from CFCs, at least where their insulation is concerned.
- Holiday trips and vacations pose a heavy burden to the climate. This applies to road traffic, but also to air traffic as a contributing factor in the destruction of the ozone layer.

Moreover, mass tourism is already responsible for the ecological ruin of many places and nature attractions (e.g. ski resorts in the Alps, but also freshwater lakes). Holidays can be planned under ecological considerations, too.

- Study the sections of the »Global Action Plan« of the United Nations pertaining to the private sphere, and write to politicians on the community, state and national levels to press the demands therein stated.

### **What can be done on the level of groups, school classes and organizations?**

- Examine energy use in the home, in our surroundings, in the community, in neighbourhood businesses. Propose that the city or district administration take stock of energy consumption and submit energy saving plans.
- Start an initiative to establish a »Climate Alliance«: Our city/community »allies« itself with a community in the Amazons. We undertake to make our lifestyle more environmentally safe and to reduce the damaging effect of global warming by conserving energy. Communities in the Amazons undertake on their

part to safeguard rain forests. The two sides initiate correspondence in a mutual support effort.

- Exert influence on the structure of local traffic. This includes quantifying the amount of traffic on certain streets or in certain areas (volume of traffic, number of passenger cars, parking habits) and examining possibilities for bicycle riders and public transport. Approach city councils demanding the introduction of traffic-quieting measures, the improvement of bicycle path systems, the barring of traffic in city centres, the improvement of local systems of public transport. Organize creative measures to highlight those demands (e.g. bicycle demonstrations, turning streets into play areas closed to traffic, blockades). In this connection, attention should be called to the global dimension (effects on climate) of such local initiatives.

## Political demands

- Binding plans should be issued by federal, state and city governments for the reduction of trace gases detrimental to the climate. The 25 per cent reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by the year 2005 as proposed by the German federal government is a start, but does not go far enough.
- Alternative renewable sources of energy (wind, water, sun) must receive more support. Atomic energy is not an acceptable answer due to its incalculable risks (storing nuclear wastes, operational hazards).
- Incentives must be provided and ordinances passed to promote and regulate energy saving measures and efficient use of primary sources of energy. This applies to industrial production, public services (utilities, transport) and private households.

Prices must be structured to make minimal use of energy economically attractive.

- Speed limits must be set for our highways (100 km.p.h.) and federal roads (80 km.p.h.) to reduce exhaust fumes and the frequency of automobile accidents.
- Consequent action must be taken so that the »automobile society« can be restructured in the direction of environmentally and humanly appropriate transportation concepts, particularly in the sector of local public transport.

## Nutrition

Our well-being and health depend to a large degree on our diet (»People are what they eat«). However, the condition of our environment, including in particular the climate development of our planet, is also influenced substantially by what we eat, how we produce our food, and the amount of energy and raw materials consumed in the process. It is ecologically significant, for example, how much energy is used during production in its various stages on up through consumption, and what amount of waste or refuse has to be disposed of in the process.

Underlying our eating habits is also the explosive issue of a just distribution of food on a world scale. In this connection the following aspects are the foremost concern of the people in the Third World: Is there a sufficient basic food supply? Are export foods produced at the expense of staple foods? Is the land theirs, or does it belong to a small group of large landowners? Are they able to adequately cultivate the land? Do they have access to seeds and farming implements? Do wars and armed conflicts prevent the planting of fields? Do producer prices suffice to make farming and marketing profitable?

Where products are produced for export to industrialized nations the primary issue is: Do we pay them a fair price for their coffee, cacao, tea or rice, for soyabeans or tropical fruits? Dependency on world market conditions often leaves no other choice for developing countries. They are forced to produce for the world market, neglecting the production of food staples for their own people. High indebtedness often enough requires them to sell at prices below the cost margin. Lastly, can the so-called »technical progress« which they »inherit« from industrialized nations provide any adequate solution for their social and economic problems?

### **Hunger there, surplus here**

The issue of nutrition effectively serves to demonstrate the dichotomy of our world. Overweight is a problem for nearly half of the inhabitants of industrialized countries. By contrast, the population of the poor countries of the South includes close to half a billion persons suffering from chronic malnutrition, despite the fact that the world's cereal crop alone would suffice to feed all of mankind. There is a gross imbalance in the distribution of supplies. People in the South are starving, while we in the North are using half of our cereal crop as fodder (which leads to a surplus of meat, eggs or milk), or for industrial purposes. World-market prices for agricultural products like coffee, tea, cacao or sugar have sunk during the past years to a drastically low level, contributing to the growth of hunger and poverty in the »Third World«.

The European Community's agricultural policy also reduces prices to the detriment of developing countries. Many countries of the »Third World«, namely, can produce sugar, beef, or wheat at prices significantly lower than European farmers. Nonetheless, they cannot sell their products here because tariff barriers deny them access to the European Community (EC) market. An even more flagrant example is provided by the overproduction in Europe of ex-

pensive beet sugar. Heavily subsidised by tax money, part of that surplus from EC countries lands on the world market at prices lower than cane sugar from developing countries, and »free market economy« fetches a double blow.

Such »export dumping«, which also occurs in other sectors, is the result of a European agricultural policy whose pricing, inappropriate technical progress, and other structural characteristics have aided the growth of surpluses. Beef products, butter, the wheat stock pile, the milk glut all go to prove that our agricultural policy, which costs tax payers nearly 62 billion German marks annually, in the final analysis has failed, a position also held by representatives of farmers' associations.

## **From the farmyard to the agrarian factory**

European agricultural policy also has a tremendous ecological impact here. For years a concentration process has been going on in Europe which on the one hand has been forcing small farms out of business and on the other has been encouraging the expansion of industrial farms. The small farm is not viable in the face of EC price and structure policy. In the Federal Republic of Germany farms are closing down at the rate of two per hour — day and night, in summer and in winter (in 1990 the figure exceeded 19,000). What is left are primarily the more modern large-scale farms of the type that are highly specialized, that employ sophisticated technology and, where livestock is concerned, that are geared to mass production, disregarding natural husbandry requirements. The ecological side-effects are evident. Intensive application of mineral fertilizers and pesticides contaminate the soil and groundwater. Residues can be found in our food. Livestock in mass production receive injections in large doses, and not just for disease control. The use of illegal drugs and hormones poses a health risk for humans. We hardly know what to do with the large accumulations of »liquid

manure». The annual average per capita consumption of meat — according to statistics a figure of 93 kilograms — could hardly be produced in a natural and ecologically appropriate manner without a drastic increase in cost.

The ecological repercussions of our nutritional practices, however, are not only related to agricultural production. Mountains of waste in the form of cans and plastic packaging material are a further growing problem for cities and communities. Another debatable factor is the trend to make our food supply increasingly independent of domestic growing and harvesting seasons. Many people can afford strawberries today even if they are flown in from the Caribbean in January. Freshly harvested apples from New Zealand are much more attractive than the somewhat shrivelled domestic winter apples. The waste of energy and transportation for such luxury, on the other hand, is enormous.

### **What can I do as an individual?**

If we intend to restructure our nutritional habits so as to make them environmentally safe and improve opportunities for the people of the Third World, we must make political and economical changes in our society. Concerted political commitment will be needed to initiate the process. However, at the individual level each one of us can contribute if, for example, we become conscious and critical consumers. Possibilities include:

- Trying to reduce our consumption of meat and finding appetizing alternatives, e.g. in the vegetarian line.
- Meat from naturally-raised animals or organically-grown vegetables are certainly desirable for reasons of health and ecology. We should be willing to pay a higher price for such products.

- We should eat domestically-grown seasonal fruits and vegetables, which helps to save energy and to support small local farmers, particularly if we buy them directly from the producer (farmers cooperatives, farmers' markets). This could also help to weaken the strong market position of large food concerns.
- Coffee, tea, honey, sugar, bananas or wine can be purchased in »Third World« shops which guarantee that the producers in the »Third World« receive a higher but adequate price for their products. This can be seen as a conscious resolution to support fairer conditions of world trade and a possibility of taking a small step in that direction.

### **What can be done on the level of groups, school classes or organizations?**

- Learn more about the situation of agriculture here in our country. Visit a modern intensive-grower operation and speak to the owners about the pressures of agriculture. As a contrast, a visit could be planned to an organic farm. Addresses are available through agricultural chambers or agencies and other agrarian organizations like the Arbeitsgemeinschaft für den ökologischen Landbau (AGL), an association for ecological farming.
- Use special occasions like Thanksgiving or World Nutrition Day to invite politicians from the local electoral district to a discussion on agricultural policy and its impacts on the »Third World«, i.e. export dumping of agricultural products, food subsidy programmes, prices of agricultural products, farming subsidies, transfer of agricultural technology, global conservation.

- An initiative could be organized in cooperation with Third World Organizations and farmers' associations, agrarian youth groups, or agrarian adult education agencies, in the form of an information stand at a farmers' market where visitors can be presented with a German apple and confronted with the question why, despite the obvious surplus, German apples cost more than bananas from Central America.
- Billboards can be designed on topics like »The sugar scandal«: EC ruins sugar prices on the world market; world-market prices fall below production costs.
- A visit can be arranged to a Third World shop to learn why coffee in such shops is twice as expensive as in »normal« stores.
- A course in cooking can be organized on meats and discussion can be directed to the aspect of a healthier, low-meat diet and to issues concerning development (problems of fodder, cattle farms in rain forest regions, wasted calories). An adult education organization (like the Volkshochschule) might be interested in offering such a course.

## Political demands

- The export of subsidized agricultural products from industrialized countries should be banned and the German Federal Government should be brought to support the redrafting of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) so as to afford market opportunities to developing countries and recognize their right to respond self-sufficiently to their nutritional needs.
- Ecologically appropriate measures should be taken to discontinue over-production of agricultural products in our country. Differentiated pricing regulations, direct subsidies for en-

vironmental measures, ecology taxes and strict ordinances governing environment should be passed to support small, restricted-acreage farming.

- Measures must be taken to expand the EC fund for stabilizing proceeds of developing countries (STABEX) so that countries of the Third World which export raw materials can finally have access to a more adequate and more stable source of income.
- Labelling requirements for foodstuffs should be extended to include information of an ecological and development-related nature (country of origin, production conditions, importing enterprise, contents, recycling capacity of packaging), so that the consumer can base his decision to purchase on those criteria.

## **Wastes**

»Produce diligently — consume diligently« is a basic principle of our economic system to which the greater majority of German citizens owe their affluence. Smokestacks must be kept smoking, industrial plants should be kept running to full capacity round the clock. This of course also means that we have to keep buying ever more new things. Economic growth aims mainly at quantity.

The gigantic mountains of refuse, which meanwhile have become a general cause of concern everywhere, are clearly the reverse side of this type of management. In the »old« Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) alone more than 230 million tons of garbage are produced annually (by industry and in private households). On the other hand there is no question that in Germany as well as in other industrialized nations much is thrown away and lost which could very well still be used (food, clothing, household appliances) or recycled. We are wasting sums that run

into the millions each year, while elsewhere (as well as sometimes in Germany) hundreds of thousands of people have to do without the basic essentials of life. This is cynicism towards nature and the rest of mankind. Waste paper and glass in particular can be recycled. The production of both these materials involves considerable amounts of energy and is a major contributor to water contamination. Recycling saves energy, minimizes the impact on climate, and avoids water pollution. By now many people here are helping to recycle paper and glass. However, vast amounts of energy and raw materials could also be saved in the recycling of aluminium, other waste metals, steel or certain plastics.

Regulations which aim to control or direct production and consumption in an environmentally appropriate manner, like the new federal packaging ordinance in Germany, barely scratch the surface of the problem. They do not go beyond the issue of disposing of already existing packaging materials. The production of superfluous and damaging materials which cannot be disposed of easily should preferably be avoided from the start, even if they are still in high demand today.

## **Wastes for the world**

Refuse and waste problems do not occur only here, but also in the so-called »Third World«. They already begin when products or production plants exported from the industrialized nations cannot be disposed of or processed in the many developing countries that receive them due to the absence of funds and technology. We only have to call to mind the atomic energy plants which companies particularly of German origin have exported to several »threshold countries« where problems of final disposal or hazards to the population were not even remotely solved. Countries of the »Third World« have been chosen as the site for many an industrial or chemical plant because governmental regulations on environment

and means for control there appeared favourable to multinational enterprises. The chemical catastrophe in Bhopal, India has not only demonstrated the potential consequences of such undertakings, but also that the price of human life in India is »cheap« when it comes to compensating victims of a catastrophe and their relatives.

Another scandal is the dumping and final disposal of so-called special wastes in countries of the »Third World«. Toxic sewage, chemical wastes containing large amounts of damaging substances or radioactive materials can be shipped and dumped there for a fraction of what disposal would cost here in Europe. Yet at the same time it is plain that the receiver countries are hardly in any position to store such poisonous substances adequately, or to keep them under close surveillance, to say nothing of destroying them. It is true that agreement was reached by many governments at the »Basel Convention« in 1989, subjecting transport of poisonous wastes to stricter control and to compulsory mutual information exchange. Still, exports of that nature were not banned in general, and that means that in future economic pressure will prompt many developing countries to continue to accept such ecological time-bombs.

### **What can I do as an individual?**

We urgently require a new responsible approach to the resources of this earth, the chief criteria of which must be the lives of the people with whom we share our planet and the impact of our actions on the environment. Such »ecological rationality« may in the long run also become economically prudent. However, it must be translated on a political level already now, even though environmental concerns do not yet adequately figure into the calculations of economic management. This will require political action on the

part of many people, but also conscious consumer behaviour. Possibilities include:

- Conscious consumption. We buy many things as a matter of bad habit without stopping to think whether we really need them. We should therefore always ask »what do I really need?« before we make a purchase.
- Maximum recycling. Paper, cardboard, glass, aluminium, tinplate, metal, certain kinds of plastics and all kitchen wastes should be collected and recycled or turned into compost. Many communities provide special containers for sorting waste.
- Avoid wasteful packaging. When shopping, do not select products in unnecessary fancy wrappings. Leave packaging materials at the store.
- No-return bottles, beverages in cans and the like should be boycotted.
- Interested questioning. Ask in stores, restaurants, but also in public buildings, what they do with their waste, whether they recycle, whether they use environmentally-safe paper. Ask whether »special wastes« or »poisonous wastes« are exported to other countries.

### **What can be done on the level of groups, school classes or organizations?**

- Approach city or community administrators to demand a waste disposal concept with maximum recycling potential. Actively encourage the installation of public collection stations for sorting waste, special garbage containers for special wastes, compost areas etc.

- Collect the garbage accumulated in our neighbourhood over the course of a week, and (after informing the garbage collection agency accordingly) sort it according to type, leaving it on »exhibit« in the street for a few days. The intention here is to clearly demonstrate how much waste we produce, but also the potential for recycling.
- Organize »eat ins« at fast food restaurants which use disposable eating utensils, and bring along items like table cloths, candles, plates and other tableware. At the same time call attention to the social and ecological consequences of the cattle ranches in the »Third World«.
- If there is no supply of tableware in your community which can be used at large public celebrations instead of disposable cups, plates etc., petition city councilmen to make such an investment.
- Collect as many beverage cans as possible and pile them up at the market place on a special occasion together with signs informing the public on how such cans are recycled, for example, in the Philippines.

## Political demands

- Regulations should be issued on a national, European or world-wide scale to ban the production and use of damaging products and to require environmentally safe disposal of wastes.
- Laws should be passed to make the disposal of packaging materials and costs connected therewith the responsibility of manufacturers.

- Economic incentives should be provided for the recycling of reusable raw materials.
- Prohibitions should be issued on the export of chemical and radioactive wastes, including the »disposal of chemical weapons« in countries of the »Third World«.

## Rain forests

There is no question as to the exceptional role which tropical rain forests play in determining the world's climate, in maintaining the diversity of species and in providing multitudes of people with an indispensable living environment. This makes their wasteful exploitation all the more appalling. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), around 200,000 square kilometres of rain forest (almost three times the size of Bavaria) are destroyed or incur lasting damage every year (an area of about 50 soccer fields per minute).

It is not just the destruction alone, but how the forests are being destroyed which is a problem. Burning off land, for example, releases large amounts of carbon dioxide that go to make up about 15 per cent of the greenhouse effect. Fragile ecosystems collapse under the pressure of human intervention and the depletion of nutrients.

The main causes for the extensive destruction of rain forests are:

- conversion into farm land;
- the establishment of cattle ranches;
- settlement;
- the construction of gigantic dams for hydroelectricity;
- extensive mining of mineral resources accompanied by the devastating problems of pollution, indiscriminate spread of low-density settlements, road construction etc.;

- large industrial projects with all their intrinsic problems, e.g. the production of charcoal for smelting iron;
- gold mining with its accompanying mercury contamination;
- extensive logging.

Many factors responsible for the destruction of the rain forests lie within the structure of the tropical countries and their political and economic situation.

However, the industrial countries also account for a large part of the responsibility. International mining enterprises share in the exploitation of iron ore, tin, clay for porcelain, bauxite, and copper. The huge dam projects, measures for exploiting mineral resources as well as the extensive clear-cutting in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia or Malaysia could not be realized without the financial assistance of industrial countries or multilateral sponsors (for example the World Bank). The North also shares responsibility in situations where high debts and the necessity to acquire foreign currency force developing countries to recklessly plunder their rain forests regardless of the cost.

It is the growing poverty of many people in the Third World which drives them to clear the rain forests in order to seek survival by working the land. Those interested in bringing this process to a halt must turn their attention to the economic reasons for this poverty and must support international remission of debt and fair and just terms of trade for the Third World, for land reform in certain countries and for promotion of small farmers in the settlements where they live. Conservation measures for the rain forests which do not fight the real causes and which are carried out without regard to the social, economic and political or cultural context, fall too short.

Many assistance programmes for saving rain forests are characterized by all too technocratic understanding reflected in concepts for efficient forest economy. No one knows for certain,

however, whether the rain forest as an ecological system is at all able to sustain on-going exploitation without incurring substantial damage, or whether it is even possible under Third-World conditions to find an effective concept of forestry management which would exclude misuse. Many people therefore advocate the protection of hitherto untouched jungle (virgin forests) from any commercial use, and in doing so also support the interests of indigenous peoples whose survival would otherwise be threatened.

Other measures must also be urgently taken to combat the causes: supplying renewable sources of energy to satisfy energy demands (in order to reduce the high consumption of firewood); providing ecologically and socially safe technology; promoting research. Above all, industrialized countries must restrict or discontinue all activities directly or indirectly contributing to the destruction of the forests. They must also drastically reduce planetary climate hazards at their source, and this mainly means the emissions which go to increase the greenhouse effect.

### **What can I do as an individual?**

- Refrain from buying and using any products made of tropical timber. This applies particularly to construction measures.
- Ask carpenters, lumber dealers and furniture retailers whether their companies use tropical timber. If so, call their attention to the consequences connected therewith and try to make the issue a public one.
- Actively support projects for the preservation of rain forests with personal and/or financial contributions to the organization of publicity campaigns particularly here in our country.

- Contribute to the preservation of forests here in our own country (almost half of all German forests are ailing or have already been destroyed). This includes treating forests with care, supporting protective measures, opting for speed limits and pleading for the reduction of damaging emissions.

## **What can be done on the level of groups, school classes or organizations?**

- Participate in campaigns organized on the occasion of the UN Environment and Development Conference (UNCED) and the World Economic Summit of 1992, with the aim of emphasizing the obvious need for correcting the course of our development.
- Question the members of parliament of your district about their commitment regarding the solution of the global ecological crisis.
- Organize a project day for your school where, e.g. the extent of the destruction of rain forests (50 soccer fields per minute) can be illustrated by a chain of people.
- Organize demonstrations with posters to stress the part played by fast food hamburger chains in the destruction of rain forests. Even though the German members of such chains use beef products almost exclusively from German sources, the same chains in other countries import substantial amounts of their beef from rain-forest regions.
- Support and promote non-government organizations in the field of environment and development and relevant networks in developing countries which genuinely represent the interests of the masses who are personally affected.

## Political demands

- Priority must be given to the absolute protection of tropical forests (virgin forests) from any kind of commercial use and exploitation.
- Emphasis must be given to adopting development policies which offer the people of tropical forests economic alternatives.
- The right of indigenous peoples to life and home must be secured and respected, and they must be guaranteed an unrestricted say and veto right in all decisions which deal in any way whatever with the use of their territory.
- All undertakings conducted in rain-forest regions by business enterprises and concerns, but also by governments, international development agencies or the World Bank must be made subject to effective controls. Development projects already in progress must be denied support if they prove to have a damaging effect on rain forests and the people who live there.
- Export security should not be granted without prior examination of the ecological consequences connected with the export product.
- There must be substantial remission of debt and reorganization of economic relations between industrial countries and the Third World so as to afford the flexibility required for lasting social and economic development.
- An internationally binding climate agreement for all nations is necessary stipulating goals for reducing greenhouse gases, saving energy and conserving forests. The major pollutors, the industrialized countries of the North, must make the relatively largest contribution.

- More than 90 per cent of all of the earth's species in plants and animals live in countries of the »Third World«. Those countries thus bear a large part of the responsibility for preserving the genetic heritage. In order to equalize their burden, industrialized countries must compensate them materially for refraining from exploiting their biological diversity.

## Conclusion

There are multiple factors endangering our Planet Earth today. Everyone is affected, but each in a different way. Some are concerned. Others are still shirking the issue.

Everyone is aware of the military potential for destruction. East and West appear to have put an end to their ideological war, but the threat to mankind persists in the growing number of conflicts motivated by religious and fundamentalist or nationalistic ideals.

Widespread poverty and hunger have far more economical and political determinants than we can deal with here in the due brevity of this basic document.

It is important that we act where we can. This document includes various suggestions. They merit creative development and improvement. Attention is also called to the document »A Global Plan for Action«, a world-wide environmental initiative introduced in September 1991 by the German television network ZDF.

This document gives practical suggestions for groups of six to twelve persons to »ecologically restructure« private households so as to bring us closer to attaining the important goals set for the year 2000 to maintain the living space of our planet like reducing wastes by 75 per cent, or carbon dioxide emissions by 20 per cent.

Our credibility is at stake, for how can any government of a tropical country believe our concern for the rain forests, or accept phase plans for their preservation conceived in industrialized countries if we ourselves are not willing to make the least restrictions, as long as we continue to produce exhaust fumes and trace gas emissions or wastes, and as long as we persist in our environmentally damaging methods of food production and nutrition? In our free market system it is not customary to ask whether economic activity has any long-term consequences on man and nature. As long as it remains less expensive to produce or use new items, the idea of recycling stands little chance. For example, as long as we find speed limits »unreasonable«, or are unable to impose them, there is little cause and no right for us to demand other nations to take drastic measures to preserve rain forests.

Development begins at our doorstep! We must ask ourselves what we are prepared to invest in creativity, commitment, willingness to reorient and militancy in order to make the world a positive place to live where all can survive now and in the future.

THAT'S OK THAT THE RAIN FORESTS  
ARE BEING DESTROYED -



HOW ABOUT IF IN THE THIRD  
WORLD THEY WOULD HAVE  
BETTER FORESTS THAN WE!



Abor Secondary School, P.O. Box 7, Abor Volta Region, Ghana, West Africa

12th February 1990

Dear Editor,

***Adult Education related to environmental issues especially tropical forest protection***

*It gives me great pleasure to comment on adult education related to environmental issues as far as tropical forest protection is concerned.*

*Lack of education is the main factor which is pulling us back. In view of this, I can see that the youth are more educated than adults. And now the Adult Education campaign is operating as a key in opening the door of literacy for the adults who are not yet educated. Since 1973 when this association was born, there has been an improvement. But still there is illiteracy, so what shall we do now?*

*I can see that if we tackle it ourselves by way of teaching our own adults in our own various cities and villages, we can solve the problem. I would like you to assure the world that if we are practising this and there is a problem, you are ready to help us with materials needed. I think in this way we can take great delight in educating our own adults who are not yet educated. I hope through this they can learn a lot about the environment and how to protect it. If they are able to see how essential the environment is to man, then we can achieve something.*

*Prosperity can be ensured if we turn to our own environment which can yield well.*

*It is a fact that the last man would die with the last tree. When one talks about the environment, it includes air, water, and the land in which man lives. Their concern have to be considered in passing laws for polluting the environment. Good examples were set by Nigeria and Italy. The dumping of industrial waste into the sea should stop.*

*Now let us look at another essential element of life. Air is one of the important elements. We cannot see but only feel its work and how essential it is to the growth of living things. We human beings are fond of polluting this air by means of using machines such as cars, tractors, aeroplanes and many others.*

*When these are working, we can see that smokes comes out which is not good for our health. This mixes together with the air that we breathe. Furthermore, this harmful smoke goes upwards and destroys the layer which pro-*

tects us from the sun which we call the »ozone layer«. We are the masters and sufferers. Nowadays the sun is beating down more severely especially in the tropics and it is having more effect on the tropical forests.

We are not caring for our tropical forests and this is leading to desertification. This phenomenon is a very good sprinter who can cover many kilometres in a second. If we should allow the world to become a desert, there would be no comfortable living and the population would decrease with increasing unproductive land.

Dear Editor, if this is the case, why can't we take a more firm stand against this while heading towards doom. In some countries they have already started this e.g. in Ghana by means of planting trees and passing laws and regulations to govern the tropical forests. The laws should include; antibush fire campaign, hunters should be stopped from entering forests without the knowledge of the Forestry Department, over grazing, deforestation and unnecessary cutting of trees should stop. Trees have to be planted yearly (new ones). We can achieve something by way of protecting tropical forests.

I have to conclude that there is nothing in this world that we cannot do. So let us follow the above steps. They are very crucial in human lives. This is my salt that I have added to the soup to make it a delicious one.

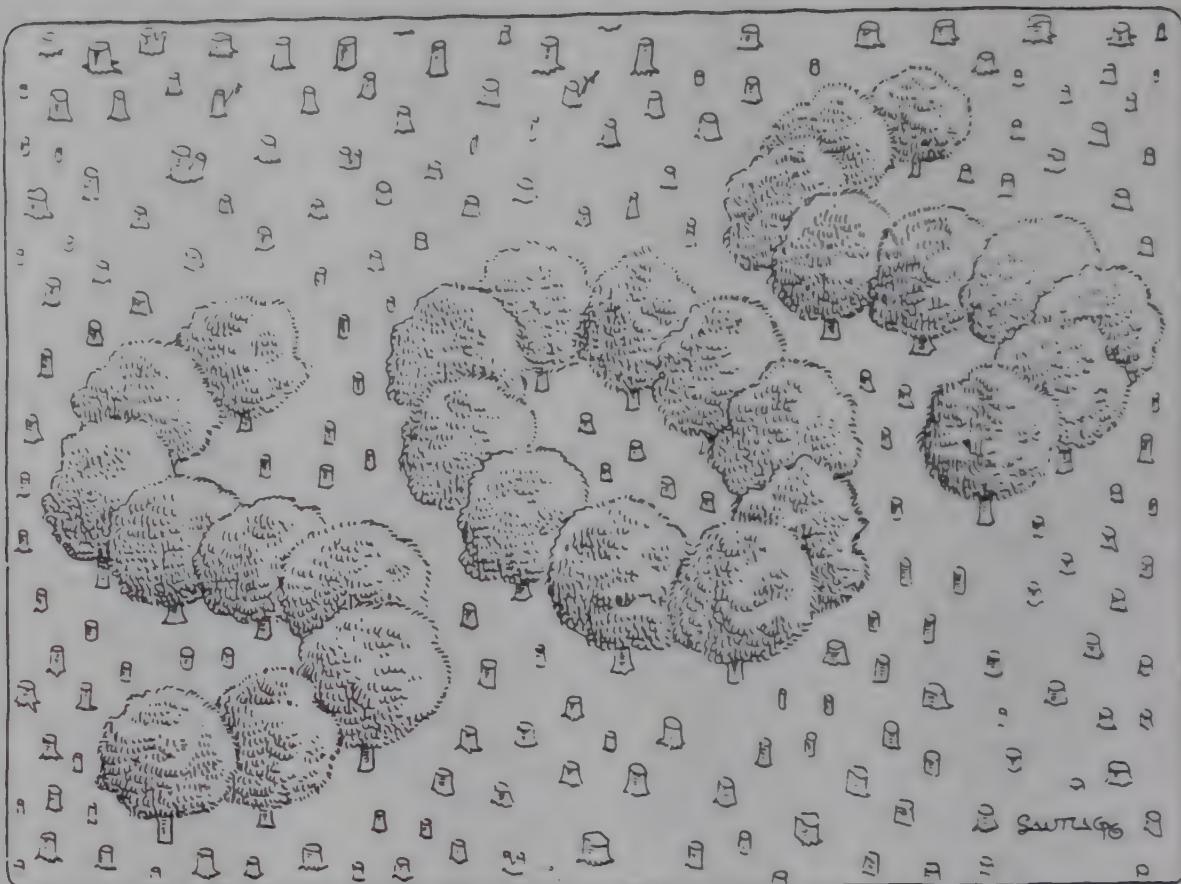
Yours faithfully

(Enyam K. Emmanuel)

### **Environmental Education Kit**

The pilot project of the Environmental Education Kit for community leaders and activists is being processed in four countries namely Bangladesh, Nepal, Vietnam and Thailand. This is to assist the community leaders and activists to understand more on the environment and development issue. The Kit will be published in the local languages. The Evaluation work shop on Environmental Education will be held in late February or early March 1992. Source: Asian Action: Newsletter of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development, Volume 81, July - September 1991, page 24.

Contact: ACFOD, P.O. Box 26, Bungthonglang P.O., Bangkok 10242, Thailand.



### **Farming the Rainforest**

This is the title of Appropriate Technology, Volume 17, Number 3, December 1990.

Contact: *IT Publications Ltd., 103-105 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4HH, United Kingdom.*

### **Southeast Asia's Dwindling Forests**

This is the title of a special report for the journal *WORLD DEVELOPMENT*, July 1991. It is published by *UNDP, United Nations Development Programme, One UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA.*



### **Learning to Live with the Environment**

This is an article by Tom Inglis published by the journal *Adult Learning*, Volume 2, Number 6, February 1991.

Contact: *National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education, 19b De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GE, England.*

### **Pakikiisa**

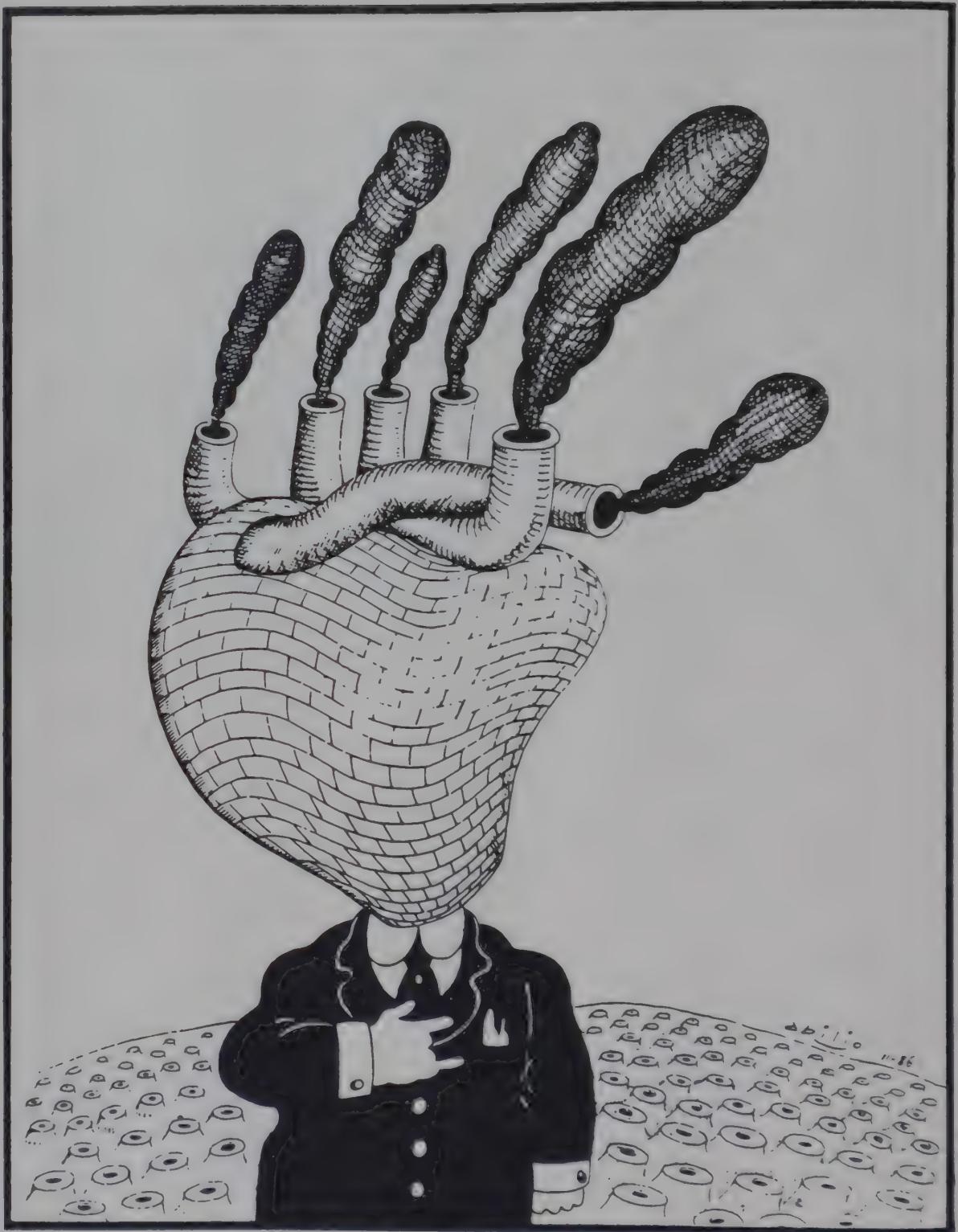
The struggle for sustainable development: Saving the Philippine Environment is the theme of no. 7, third quarter 1991 of *Pakikiisa - The Philippine Development NGO Update*.

Contact: *Consuelo Katrina A. Lopa, Philink - Philippines, 74 B Xavierville Avenue, Loyola Heights, 1108 Quezon City, Philippines.*

### **Development ... a Green Issue**

Environment and development in South-East Asia and the Pacific is a development dossier, Number 30, edited by Russell Rollason and published by the Australian Council for Overseas Aid.

Contact: *ACFOA, GPO Box 1562, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia.*



*What do we know about adult education as carried out by or through non-adult education organisations? This question refers to content and methods, in particular however to recognizable results. The article describes the theoretical concept and first results of a long-term project presently headed by Professor Konrad Elsdon. It bears the title »Research Project on the Educational Impact of Local Voluntary Organisations«. Professor Elsdon works in the Department of Adult Education, University of Nottingham. His contact address is: 5 Hall Gardens, Bramcote, Nottingham NG9 3LR, England.*

**Konrad T. Elsdon**

## **Voluntary organisations, learning and democracy<sup>1</sup>**

### **Introduction**

In Britain (and no doubt in other countries) voluntary organisations always have, and continue to play a wide variety of roles. These tend to merge into each other, and often change as an organisation or its context changes, but they can be roughly divided into categories:

- (a) Organisations, whether »Charitable«/social/educational/developmental, which pioneer entirely new services or new modes of activity, which are in due course acknowledged to be universally necessary, and taken over by the state as public services. Examples are the church schools and the adult schools: both eventually became part of the public education system.
- (b) Organisations identical with or closely similar to (a), but which continue independently to supplement public services or plug gaps in them as necessary. Examples include voluntary adult education centres, voluntary organisations which undertake library and other non-medical services in public hospitals, the Red Cross, the Citizens' Advice Bureaux, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.
- (c) Organisations which provide a separate and independent service, but which co-operate with related public services in more or less structured networks, and which may receive financial and other forms of support from public sources. Examples are community associations and centres, women's organisations such as the Women's Institutes or the Townswomen's Guilds, the Educational Centres Association, the Workers' Educational Association, boards of prison visitors, voluntary literacy schemes, Alcoholics Anonymous, Councils of Voluntary Service. Slightly more remote from the state but co-operating with its services and, some of them, acting as watchdogs on them, are voluntary organisations such as local civic and conservation societies and self-help groups such as the National Childbirth Trust or Compassionate Friends.
- (d) Organisations which serve the usually specialised interests of particular groups of people and which are entirely separate from public services. Local examples are dramatic, musical or horticultural societies, bird watchers, archaeological societies,

etc. Some of these may belong to regional or national networks or parent bodies.

Clearly group (a) is largely concerned with pioneering. This tends to arise where an individual becomes sensitive to a particular need, volunteers to work at it, gathers supporters, develops the work, until eventually it assumes an organisational identity and structure. When this becomes sufficiently powerful it creates political pressure. As a result the state is forced to act, usually through legislation, and a new public policy and public service are created. Famous examples of this sequence are the work of Elizabeth Fry in prison reform, of Florence Nightingale in the development of modern nursing and hospitals, and of Albert Mansbridge, the founder of the WEA, in adult education.

Group (b) can vary widely from work resembling the initial phases of (a), prior to receiving public acknowledgment and support, to activities which are in the process of being handed over to the state. But it also includes work which probably needs assistance from public resources and maybe moral support, though it attracts private resources as well, and which needs the degree of flexibility and the personal touch which a public service cannot provide. Typical instances are the international work of the Red Cross and, locally, that of boards of prison visitors. Neither of these could ever hope to receive the trust and confidence of refugees or prisoners if they were not known to be totally independent of governments and of prison administration.

Group (c) includes work which depends for its fundamental characteristics, and therefore for the quality of its output, upon organisational autonomy, on the democratic responsibility of the membership, and on freedom to criticise and oppose. In a developed democracy it is perfectly possible for it to maintain such a position while actually receiving financial and other resources from the state, and co-operating with related public services. It is

entitled to these because it fulfils functions which the state, either centrally or locally, accepts as necessary or at least desirable, but cannot or will not undertake itself.

Group (d), finally, may well have informal links with either the state or any of the other groups, but consists of entirely separate activities which do not attract grant or other public assistance. Yet even here there may be indirect links. A folk dancing group is entirely independent, but it may rent a room in a school, the members of a badminton club might join a coaching class in an adult education centre, and a study group could meet in the public library.

These categories obviously merge into each other. In a general way they form a spectrum. This ranges from those, at one extreme, which, although not yet in receipt of public resources are deliberately on their way to becoming public services; it continues through a gradually diminishing degree of state involvement and resources, to those at the other extreme which are, for all ordinary purposes, entirely separate from the public domain. There is just one rather peculiar category which does not fit into this model at any point. This is concerted voluntary effort and organisation by public servants working to change a public service in some way from within, to as it were lift official policy off its feet. In its effects it shares the characteristics of (a); in Britain the development of teacher training in the education of adults is a particularly clear example of it. However, it differs structurally to such an extent that this is hardly a suitable context in which to study it.

## **The research project**

This categorisation is admittedly crude, but it begins to enable us to impose one kind of order on what turns out to be an enormous field. More sensitive and discriminating distinctions require a multi-dimensional matrix such as that which has been developed

by John Reynolds for the project on which this article draws. However, the sheer quantitative importance of voluntary organisations is clear. It is rarely possible, even in professional surveys, to establish a complete record of all those which operate in any particular area. The 43 which were known to exist in a village of less than 1800 people where one of our case studies was conducted, may represent more, but not very much more than the average in proportion to population.

Wherever we live we are thus surrounded by at any rate quantitative evidence of the incidence of voluntary organisations. There is a general belief in their importance, a conviction of their value to society and of the tremendous amount of learning, both formal and especially informal, that goes on among their members and beyond. This is literally an article of faith in our society. Statutory (public) authorities place more and more reliance upon them. There are many published histories and descriptions of particular voluntary organisations and their work. But however strong the impressions, there has been very little attempt to find hard evidence for the individual and social impact that is being claimed.

To move beyond history and impressions we must find hard evidence in the shape of answers to questions: **what** impact is being made on **whom?** **how** is it achieved? **how great** is it? **how is it transmitted**, and **how far**? Without these answers we do not actually **know** what the formal or informal educational impact of voluntary organisations is. With them, we can identify the characteristics and origins of good experience. And that means we shall have the means to help people and organisations to learn from good practice, to apply it themselves, to spread it to others, and to argue for public support of their work.

## Methods, choices and execution

This is what the project on which this paper draws is trying to achieve. But before we get to that point we have to dig out and marshal the evidence. For this purpose we have created a model (a multi-dimensional matrix) which reflects as faithfully as possible the range of characteristics and objectives of voluntary organisations, the personal objectives of their members and the variety of geographical and social circumstances in which organisations operate. From this we derive a representative sample of some 20 to 25 such organisations. Each one in the sample will be the subject of an intensive case study. In themselves these case studies (which we are publishing at intervals as they reach completion) are intended to form a thesaurus of good, or at least interesting, practice in voluntary organisations. However, when all of them are completed they will also form the body of hard evidence on which we shall base our overall findings and such practical recommendations as may arise from them.

Clearly the main emphasis of any approach to such an enquiry must be qualitative: quantitative methods seem unlikely to be appropriate to the task: how, for instance, would one express numerically a comparison of the educational impact of a small Women's Institute in a remote village to that of a choral society in a large city? Nevertheless a qualitative study has to be disciplined, and cannot be purely descriptive. In addition it must rest on values, and these in their turn imply a consciousness if not an actual application of standards. What are these to be? And how are they to be applied? Will it be possible to secure a reasonably valid approach by adopting some form of triangulation?

Beyond the primary questions the project seeks to answer there were thus innumerable others which had to be answered first, about ways in which such case studies can be conducted, and how valid, useful or at least significant answers can be obtained. For

These reasons the project's first year worked cautiously and experimentally on just two strongly contrasted case studies. It did so in deliberate and open co-operation with the organisations concerned.

The evolution of the enquiry was intentionally tentative in its initial study of a women's discussion group. This was placed in a wider context by looking, in echelon with the first, at a much larger scale exercise in community development. This second study involved tracing, in the first instance, the history of a voluntary organisation which acts as an umbrella for all other voluntary organisations in a particular locality and in co-operation with local, regional and national statutory services, in order to solve certain problems of that locality and stimulate major change. The locality concerned is a large isolated village which was at least originally less exposed to the influence of surrounding populations than is usual in industrialised countries. As a result intervening variables were at a minimum, and a case study here could provide a particularly clear illustration of the interplay of volunteer and professional, of local and central government, of statutory and voluntary action, and of the changing relationship of particular voluntary organisations with each other and with the umbrella body. The history of this particular development covers almost exactly 25 years.

Its beginnings were not entirely »pure« since the initial stimuli were delivered from outside, though on internal initiative. In its execution, however, it was and remains a rare instance of genuine unadulterated community development in the classic mould: here the community was led to identify its problems, needs, resources and constraints, to match, plan and act **for itself** (i.e. not following an outside expert's ideas or policies), to draw upon outside resources under its own control, to execute plans, evaluate effects and move on to the next phase.

Carrying out the case studies in echelon enabled us to transfer methodological lessons either way: the second case study has been outlined here because some of its early lessons have influenced the initial smaller enquiry, and also in order to give some impression of the overall pattern of this project, in which each of the contributing enquiries is intended reciprocally to interact with the others as they progress. None of the case study reports should be regarded as final: it is very likely that the perceptions on which the first two are based will not just influence those of subsequent organisations, but that the enquiries into these will illuminate the early ones in ways which remain to be discovered.

Just two case studies have been completed in the first year, and are published<sup>2</sup>. One is of an informal discussion group of women in a small Midlands town. The community development project, the Ingleton Rural Community Association, is in the Yorkshire Dales. The scale of the research has now grown to include a team of three, half-time workers, and we are now working on an inner city Settlement. An independent adult education centre and several specific interest organisations and self-help schemes will also be studied in 1991-2 and the findings published.

The project will require several years' work, and it would be foolish to generalise or even speculate on the strength of just two completed case studies. What can be told is how the work has been done so far, and what evidence these case studies have produced.

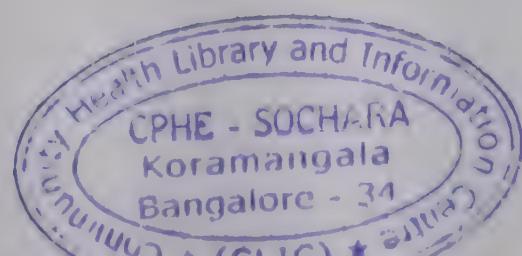
## **Some findings**

The women's discussion group was chosen as the initial study. It was assumed that with only 24 members it was small and would therefore be simple, a good case study on which to cut one's teeth. I could not have been more mistaken. The task was carried out by means of structured small group interviews in the first instance.

These were then backed up by individual anonymous questionnaires, but these produced less information than the group interviews, which were incredibly frank. In fact, the group co-operated with the most extraordinary generosity and trust. The result of that was that the information which came through was so rich and so personal that it took a great deal of digesting. It also had to be disguised by hastily re-naming the town and moving it into a fictional county.

What I was trying to find out was what kind of learning if any had been happening to the group members, but also whether the learning or other effects upon them had been passed on to others, like concentric ripples in water. People were, as I said, amazingly frank about themselves but less so about their families and other contacts, and very modest indeed about anything beyond that. Their very frankness meant that I could not really go beyond them and interview their contacts. However, a good deal of other information was derived indirectly, by implication, and some useful evidence was collected from local professionals. As a result there was more multi-dimensionality about the findings, and more confirmation of the evidence, than had been expected at first.

So — what was the impact of that small informal discussion group on its members and others? The evidence comes to about 40 pages of print and only a brief summary is possible here. At the level of social learning the group creates a network in which people feel safe and accepted, and which is an effective source of important information for members and others. It creates a sense of being cared for and caring, of fellowship, but it is at the same time easy and undemanding: »you can come and go away again... there is no guilt«. Social development, mutual support and the resulting confidence enable members not just to feel different but to undertake activities and relationships they would not have thought possible previously.



This was the context in which they developed more specific skills: listening constructively to each other, entering upon each other's arguments, tolerating disagreement, discussing systematically and effectively — these are skills which are not as common as they should be. This group has acquired them in good measure in the context of the more formal learning content of the regular programme. A whole range of new interests had been sparked off by this, and were being pursued by members. They ranged from poetry to swimming and penal reform to consumer education. Moreover, the standard way in which such groups make up their programmes meant that all members had learned, or were learning, to prepare a subject and introduce it to others.

In the occupational area learning effects had been most pronounced in the case of members who were undertaking some form of training, or were returning to paid work after a period of domesticity. There was solid evidence of group assistance and support to these in the past and currently. It was interesting to learn that there was a substantial number of former members of this and other such groups in Silverbridge who had been through this process of confidence building, intellectual development, social and psychological support in the course of re-training and re-entry into the job market. The group, or others like it elsewhere, had done their job for them, and they had moved on.

Equally interesting were what we call the political effects, using the term in its broad original meaning. The total autonomy and absence of hierarchy of the group are in themselves a form of political education because they make absolute personal responsibility and participation inescapable while providing a training in both. The group had taught most members organising skills, developed the civic courage to »stick our necks out and speak up«, and to act in support of whatever they thought was right and necessary. One of the very few rules of the group's umbrella organisation is that groups **as such** may not engage themselves in

any action on issues in the public domain. However, that did not prevent members of this one from using what they had learned, and acting **as individuals** on a great range of such issues, from overmighty head teachers to crime and punishment, sex education to disarmament and environmental pollution.

Among personal effects of group membership literally all respondents began by mentioning that they had learned to be tolerant and confident. They had become more sensitive to each other, and to others around them. All this had led most of them into new involvements and forms of service to others, but it had also given them a greater degree of self-awareness and assertiveness. »(Experience of the group) has made me independent of the people around me ... makes me view my surroundings more objectively, **choose** what I do and get involved in.«

There was good evidence of the way in which the learning and change, the new skills and knowledge that were developed in the group, had been passed on to members' own families. Of perhaps still greater importance was the way in which members' own greater maturity and individuality was transforming stereotypical attitudes within families, and contributing to the maturation of husbands and sons in particular. More remote contacts were also found to be affected: new-won confidence, competence and sense of personal worth communicated themselves. Members were recognised as being better at taking responsibility, and were therefore being entrusted with it more often both at work and in other contexts.

It is tempting to continue, but impracticable in an article. What must be shared in conclusion is the author's amazement at the effectiveness of such a small, highly informal and far from consciously feminist group in strengthening women's role in society, the depth and range of its educational and educative and social effects, and

the degree to which these penetrate into the local catchment population.

The second case study was the Ingleton Rural Community Association, together with its Ingleborough Community Centre. It was chosen as a deliberate contrast in order to test our methods on a large and highly complex organisation with a large user membership despite the small size of its catchment population of about 1800. The Association is a direct agent, an umbrella for some 40 other organisations including statutory public services, and a host to still others. It acts in its own right, in conjunction with the Parish Council, the District Council, the Local Education Authority, the Regional Sports Council and Regional Arts. It owns and manages (partly in conjunction with some of these others) very substantial property ranging from its own centre and extensive sports facilities to a swimming pool — about £ 600,000 worth of buildings altogether, not counting land values.

All this has been developed and managed since the foundation of the Community Council (later the Association) in 1961, and the history of that development is in itself an index of what a gradually growing group of very ordinary people with no specialist preparation can learn to do for themselves. Still more, it was possible to trace not just the learning and development of those who were directly concerned but that of other people, of the village as such, and of the effect of the village and of the Association upon the area and beyond.

The programme of structured interviews used the same headings here as at Silverbridge. We intend to continue this practice, because it will enable us to make cross-comparisons between the case studies. Almost all interviews at Ingleton were individual. They were conducted with members of three categories of people, and their responses were analysed separately and compared. This enabled us to test them against each other and prove them mutual-

ly consistent. Given this consistency, it also meant that all the case materials could be looked at from all these different points of view. This gave a multi-dimensional reality to the overall picture, like a three-dimensional model of a landscape built up from trigonometrical measurements.

The first category of interviews was what I called the inner circle, meaning those who had been or are responsible for the foundation, development and current management of the whole enterprise. The second were individuals who were simply regular users of the facilities, and among them are included a sub-group of people whose move to Ingleton was at least influenced or indeed precipitated by the activities and facilities which the Association had developed. A third category, of external witnesses, included two sub-groups. One was of observers who were independent of the Association but lived in the village; the other of people from right outside whose jobs, professional tasks or elected offices put them in possession of evidence about the more remote and extraneous impact of what was happening at Ingleton.

Not surprisingly, people in Ingleton had learned all those things which the Silverbridge group had learned. But beyond those the creation and continuing development and management of a complex property-owning community, service and adult education organisation had involved them in acquiring organisational, managerial, financial, planning and political skills of a very high order. Anything from investment of reserves to football, from developing small industry and the tourist trade to cricket coaching, from building to conversational French, producing plays, running an art gallery or a tourist information bureau, looking after old people's welfare or a mother-and-toddler group, — anything is now taken in their stride. So, too, is the political activity and negotiation which arises in the course of physical, financial and legal planning and the social and political interests of the village as a whole. No wonder that a significant number of respondents had become per-

sonally more interested and actively involved in politics. And elected people and officials at District level and beyond find Ingleton more politically competent, active and constructive than other comparable places. It is also considered to be more lively and interesting and open to ideas, and this attracts lively-minded immigrants. Some of these, in their turn, contribute to the vitality and range of opportunities.

Perhaps the most remarkable finding from this case study is the degree to which the people of Ingleton generally, and not just the core group of activists, have provided themselves with an intensive and very successful political education. Ingleton as a community or indeed a polity presents an exceptional picture in this respect. It does so at a time when political literacy and political intelligence in our population at large are certainly much lower than in several comparable countries, and when Government has actually seen fit to exclude political education from certain educational curricula. The evidence available to the project certainly indicates that the level of political literacy and political skill in Ingleton is high as a result of the developments which people have undertaken. This in turn has made a positive contribution to the welfare of the community itself and more widely to that of the whole of the Craven District and of communities elsewhere which have turned to Ingleton for information and advice.

Respondents who were in a position to judge claimed that the level of political literacy and skill in Britain to-day is lower than it used to be, and is continuing to shrink. Improvements are certainly needed and, as one respondent urged, means must be found to encourage the practice of democracy and train people for it. It is places with experience such as Ingleton's which possess markedly greater knowledge and experience of democratic political working than is normally found to-day in communities large or small elsewhere, and perhaps not only in Britain. Perhaps we need to encourage community development projects and all other forms of self-go-

verning organisations not just for what they may achieve for local people but to ensure the survival and growth of democracy. One of my respondents said »if Ingleton were a country, dictatorship couldn't happen«.

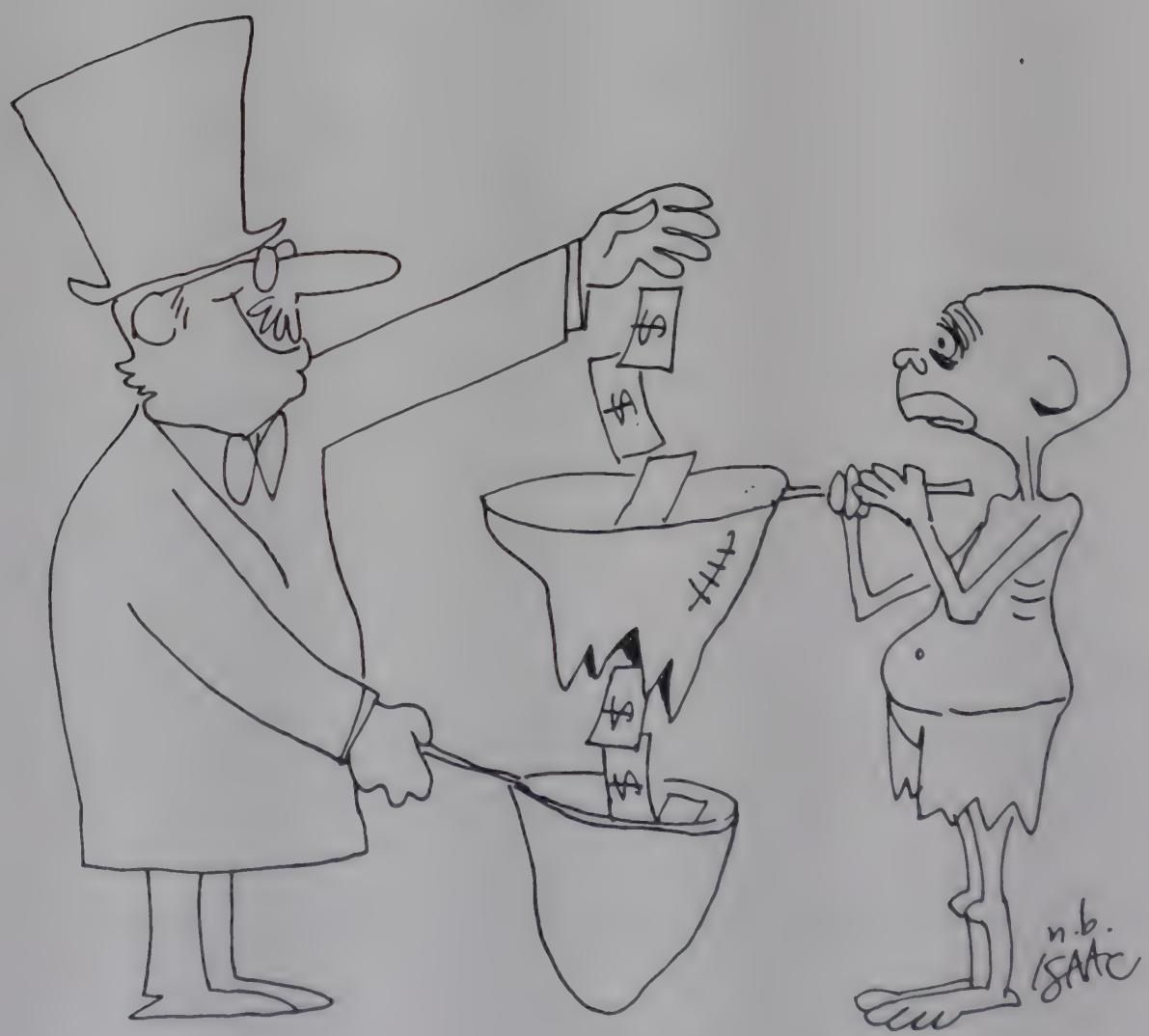
#### Notes

1. The cost of the first year's work on this project was met by a grant from the Nuffield Foundation. Its continuation is financed by the Universities Funding Council.
2. Elsdon, K.T., *Adult Learning in Voluntary Organisations*, University of Nottingham, Department of Adult Education, 1991.

#### Tomorrow's Catch

This is the theme of ODRC Reports, Volume 19, Number 2, July 1991. It is published quarterly by the International Development Research Centre of Canada. Its aim is to keep an international readership informed about the work IDRC supports in developing countries as well as other development issues of interest.

Contact: *Communication Division, IDRC, P.O. Box 8500, Ottawa, Canada K1G 3H9.*



*This is the first article in our journal on education and development in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Somsak J. is the infrequently used name of a long-time resident and short-time consultant in Thailand and other countries in Indochina.*

**J. Somsak**

## **Education, development and cause for concern in the Lao PDR**

*»The times they are a changin':«*

Bob Dylan sang it. The author saw it — in Laos.

### **Introduction**

The Lao People's Democratic Republic is in transformation. Look at this key indicator: Two years ago, one could cross any of Vientiane's major streets blindfolded with less than a 2% chance of making contact with any vehicle other than a bicycle. In June 1991, I had to wait 30 seconds to 1 1/2 minutes for a break in the (motorized) traffic on these same roadways.

This is what many people refer to as development.

Laos is a country with a difficult past. Prior to 1975, it was a country ruled, demarcated, controlled, bombed and otherwise subjected to the whims of a succession of foreign powers for nearly 100 years. Approximately at the end of the Vietnam War, there was a »revolution«, one which had been gaining momentum for 30 years, and the former government was replaced by a socialist one.

## General statistics

Today, Laos is a country with increasingly conflicting patterns and contradictory statistics<sup>1</sup>. Here are some of the best estimates of the latter (courtesy of UNDP):

- Land area of 236,800 km<sup>2</sup> (slightly smaller than the United Kingdom or Oregon)
- Population of about 4.1 million (about the same as in Ho Chi Minh City); slightly more than 17 persons to each km<sup>2</sup>
- Gross Domestic Product of U.S.\$ 308 million in 1989 (far less than one half the cost of a new stealth bomber)
- Government revenues of \$57.6 million (18.7% of GDP) in 1989, mainly from electricity and timber.
- Annual per capita income of \$180 in 1989
- Infant mortality of 117 per 1,000 births and one doctor per 12,600 population outside of Vientiane.

## Education

Today, Laos is a socialist country cautiously edging toward elements of capitalism. Why? Well, look at the figures above. And look at the one facet of life which could have the greatest impact on

the future — education. It isn't working. In a moment we'll look at some more figures. But first, impressions.

In Vientiane, Savannakhet, Luang Prabang and a few other cities, there are lots of students, neatly uniformed and in their schools. They are studying either 5 years at the primary, 3 years at the lower secondary, or 3 years at the upper secondary level. They are not studying at the university level, because there isn't one. Although there are plans.

This is not the case in the rural areas. Not where the school building itself is constructed of bamboo and thatch. Where the teacher may have finished the 5th grade or maybe the 10th. And may or may not receive her/his \$10 – 20 salary every month. And, thus, may or may not be in the classroom. Which may also be the case for the children, whose presence in the low yielding rice fields is more essential. Especially when the school has few books. And most of those are about subjects which do not directly relate to their lives.

No wonder you find statistics like the following:

- 66% of school aged children enrolled in primary school
- 1st to 5th grade survival rate of 33%
- 40% of students repeating the 1st grade
- An average of 13.5 student-years to produce each 5th grade graduate
- 35% of all teachers professionally unqualified
- 5% of the teacher training curriculum devoted to teacher training; the rest being standard secondary education.

## Ethnic diversity

But what can you do when government revenue is but 57% of government expenditure? And expenditure for education amount

to a mere 3.8–4.0% of Gross Domestic Product — \$12 million per year, the cost of 12.3 bowls of noodles for each child 16 or under. Bodies alone require more than that to function properly, let alone minds. Well, I guess it could be worse, couldn't it? In fact, it is worse — for the ethnic minorities, which comprise so much of the nation's total population, particularly the remotely located highland groups, the *Lao Soung*. Look at these figures:

- Highland tribes comprise 10% of the Lao population, but only 4% of primary school students; and a slight 0.6% at the secondary level.
- A province like Louang Namtha, which is only 1% ethnic Lao, has between 10% and 18% of its children in school.
- In Louang Namtha the 5th grade population is approximately 3% of the 1st grade population.
- In mountainous areas, the average number of student-years to produce a 5th grade graduate rises to 21.8.

This is even more serious when you consider that the ethnic minority population of the Lao PDR is maybe 40%, or 50% of the total. The latest figures (1984–85 census) of the Institute of Ethnology on the 47 ethnic groups in the country are:

● Lao	1,804,101	50.51% (of the total)
● Phu Thai	441,497	12.36%
● Khammu	389,694	10.91%
● Hmong	231,168	6.47%
● Lue	102,760	2.88%
● Katang	72,391	2.03%
● Makoung	70,382	1.97%
● Akha	58,500	1.64%
● 39 others	401,123	11.23%
Total	3,571,616	

Broken down by language groups, you get the following<sup>2</sup>:

● Lao-Thai	2,387,504 ( 6 groups)	66.84%
● Mon-Khmer	827,773 (31 groups)	23.18%
● Hmong-Yao	249,259 ( 2 groups)	6.98%
● Tibeto-Burmese	100,898 ( 7 groups)	2.82%
● Haw (Chinese)	6,361 ( 1 group)	0.18%

It's quite understandable that high levels of access to education are difficult to achieve, not to mention sufficient teachers and materials and curricula relevant to such disparate needs and conditions. Estimates of adult illiteracy levels of up to 43% and even 56% are, thus, quite credible. Especially when the Department of Adult Education & Literacy has a staff of 7 and an annual operational budget of around \$1,400.

### A tentative conclusion

All in all, if you review the statistics and observe the realities (as I did in 5 of 17 provinces), you come to a rather inescapable conclusion: **While there is a fair amount of schooling in the Lao PDR, there is far less education.** Witness the blackboards in secondary and teacher training schools covered with chemistry formulas, algebra equations and logarithms (which are difficult to relate to anyone's rural needs). Witness the agriculture school without a single tree planted in the grounds. Witness the children who can read the texts (when they have them) but cannot plant a kitchen garden.

At the same time, it borders on the amazing that Laos, which in all honesty does not have the financial means to support an educational system, is able to provide even these limited opportunities for 66% of the school aged children. It is unfortunate, however, that this very strong commitment did not allow the nation to break away

from the largely irrelevant western bias of education for selection (e.g. algebra over agriculture) rather than education for life.

The Lao government, to its credit, is quite aware of this. The newly elected President, Kaysone Phoumvihane, said so in the recent Vth Party Congress:

*»The quality of education was low. The number of dropouts and children enlisted for primary schools but who could not attend has increased, especially in rural areas.*

*We can say that the implementation of the social policy is still our weakest point and our most difficult problem at present.«*

## National development

President Kaysone has called for renewed efforts in educational reform throughout the country, because the Party is »deeply aware of the importance of education in national development.« Which takes us back to crossing the road in Vientiane. A considerable portion of the motorized vehicle traffic keeping you from getting to the other side of the street is »development vehicles«.

In fact, the **international developers** now comprise a significant ethnic minority themselves, certainly more than the 842 Lolo in 41st place in the ethnology rankings. This fact itself is a subject of concern. And not just in terms of the Thai and Japanese businessmen intent on buying up the forests for lumber exports. And not just because of the inherent corrupting influences of sudden and vast influxes of international development funds. Let's take a quick look at the figures (courtesy of UNDP again):

External development assistance is up from U.S.\$47 million in 1981 to U.S.\$162 million in 1989 and, despite the decline in assistance

from the USSR and Eastern bloc nations, is on the rise. In 1989, aid from Vietnam, the USSR, the GDR and Hungary (in non-convertible currency) amounted to 23% of the total. The remaining 77% (in convertible currencies) came mainly from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UNDP, Japan and Sweden (with 45% in loans). The breakdown by sector was as follows:

	<i>in million U.S. \$</i>	<i>in %</i>
Agriculture, forestry	31,231	19,2
Economic management	30,763	19.0
Transport & communications	30,098	18.6
Human resources development	24,614	15.2
Natural resources, energy	22,827	14.1
Humanitarian	12,687	7.8
Social development	1,876	1.1
Other areas	7,851	5.0

## **Educational development**

With a little interpretation, these numbers give an idea of the importance of education to foreign donors. Although education is not identified as a specific area of assistance, it must fall under »human resources development« and/or »social development«. The vast majority of human resources development involves study in foreign countries (particularly in the non-convertible area) and technical training, which is not education of the masses. This leaves a few per cent for education.

It appears that educational development has not been a high donor priority on their support list. More recently, however, the perspective has changed. Let us look at what is about to happen and the role of the **ethnic development minority** which we noted earlier as a subject of concern.

At the risk of overgeneralization, let me generalize. There are currently two major schools of thought with respect to the best approach to donor assisted educational development in Laos<sup>3</sup>.

**School 1:** The development of education in the Lao PDR is best achieved through the establishment of new structures, systems and administrative procedures, accompanied by the upgrading of personnel, equipment, materials and facilities. This process must commence at the national level and set single national standards for the »delivery« of all education (and, therefore, development) to the people.

This concept is based on the assumption that only a fully developed national education system, meeting criteria similar to those employed by the more economically developed countries, can provide for effective education at all levels. It is subscribed to by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and apparently seconded by most ranking education officials. This orientation is very likely to become fact and guide the vast majority of educational reform actions with the signing and implementation of the World Bank and ADB loan projects in 1992. The total financial assistance (most of which is loan credits) proposed over a period of 5 years for these two projects is approximately U.S.\$50 million — IBRD = \$35 million and ADB = \$15 million.

**School 2:** The development of education in the Lao PDR is best achieved through the ground level design and testing of education-cum-development approaches appropriate to the wide diversity of the Lao population, which then become institutionalized into a gradually improving and expanding system of education conforming to the Lao identity. This process must commence at the lowest levels both in order to meet serious community needs and formulate models which are consistent with the people's lives.

This concept is based on the assumption that lasting and effective development of the individual and the nation must be founded in education highly relevant to the needs of individuals and communities. It is subscribed to by a minority of ranking education officials as well as UNICEF, UNESCO and a variety of local non-government organizations (e.g. Ecoles Sans Frontières, Quaker Service Laos, Norwegian Church Aid, Mennonite Central Committee) which are providing financial and other assistance in support of such education. It also appears likely that UNDP will soon support this concept. The total proposed assistance over 5 years is less than U.S.\$5 million.

There are definite advantages and disadvantages to both approaches. But considering the financial scale of the proposed \$35 million World Bank project, it is worthwhile to review it in brief. There are a total of six sub-projects, as follows:

- Restructure the Ministry of Education and Sports and draft a new Education Act
- Rehabilitate, furnish and equip schools in 7 provinces
- Develop new curricula for primary and secondary schools
- Establish an Educational Management Information System
- Revitalize nonformal adult education
- Contribute to the establishment of a Project Implementation Unit in the Ministry.

The overall budget breakdown is also of interest: School construction (42%); Foreign experts (10%); Training (10%); and nothing else more than 3%, except for Miscellaneous and Inflation.

## **Causes for concern**

There are already a number of causes for concern with respect to the rapid reformation of education in this, one of the ten poorest

countries in the world. But both the nature and content of the IBRD and ADB education loan projects raise new concerns.

1. Can the Lao PDR efficiently utilize an additional \$50 million (nearly doubling the present education budget) in a five year period?
2. Can the Lao economy deal with loan repayment on this level?
3. Are schools, rather than education, what is most needed?
4. In order to serve community subsistence and development needs and respond to local conditions, shouldn't educational reforms begin at the village level?
5. Is a western formulated model for education, overseen by foreign advisors, likely to preserve Lao culture and traditions?
6. Can centrally devised curricula respond to ethnic diversity?
7. Should a foreign entity be the one to propose restructuring of an entire ministry? And the drafting of a new education act?

These are questions that continue to haunt the author and could just as easily haunt coming generations of Lao as well. For although the loan can be repaid in 30 - 40 years, radical western-biased changes in the Lao people cannot.

## **Hindsight and foresight**

Education is a long term process. It is not a product. It demands the ability for rear-view vision, historical analysis. It demands skill in looking ahead, matching ideals with resources. It demands both of these, but more importantly it requires the determination to make a

hard decision today and learn by what you do tomorrow. It requires a decision that only a nation's people should make, for it is they who will have to live with it, for a long time to come.

So...

... if we look back 20 and more years, what do we see? Foreign powers and uneducated people and, therefore, bombs.

... if we look ahead another 20 or more years, what do we see? Economic powers and »people in schools« and, therefore, (time) bombs?

#### Notes

1. While statistics in Laos vary widely depending on the source and few are accurate, they can serve as indicators of the situation.
2. The figures in these two breakdowns don't quite add up, because . . . well, that's the way the figures are.
3. Excerpted from the June 1991 consultant report prepared for UNDP/Laos — »Educationally Disadvantaged in Laos«.

#### The Issue of Technology

Several articles and a good amount of information are published in issue number 9, August 1991, of *NETWORK '92*. It is published by the *Centre for our Common Future, Palais Wilson, 52 Rue des Paquis, Ch-1201 Geneva, Switzerland*.

#### GO-BETWEEN

This is a newsletter published at irregular intervals by the *UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS), Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland*.



*Vietnam, too, is represented for the very first time in our journal with an article on literacy and adult education. It deals mainly with the historical development and with new trends as linked to future tasks. Nguyen Quang Kinh is the Director of the Continuing Education Department of the Ministry of Education, Hanoi, Vietnam.*

**Nguyen Quang Kinh**

## **Literacy and continuing education in Vietnam**

### **History**

Prior to 1945, Vietnam used to be a colony of France with 95% of her then adult population illiterate. In view of this situation, by 1938 – 1939, a few scholars and intellectuals formed an organization, the Association for the Dissemination of the National Script, which aimed at helping the illiterates to learn the three R's. In spite of immense difficulties, the Association's activity was quite a success. Apart from forming literacy classes and training literacy instructors, its scholars formulated a new method of teaching spell-

ing, reading and writing the rational elements of which are still applied today.

In September 1945, immediately after national independence, in the first session of the Government Council, President Ho Chi Minh laid down 3 urgent tasks, i.e. »Combat foreign invasion, combat famine and combat ignorance«. On 8 Sept. 1945, the Government signed a decree forming the Department of Popular Education and evening popular education classes to bring literacy to the farmers and the workers. Since then, the »8 September« has been commemorated as the day of popular education, the Literacy Day of Vietnam.

For the past 45 years, the Vietnamese people have been persistent in the abolition of illiteracy. Large-scale literacy campaigns were launched in 1945 – 1946, 1956 – 1959, 1975 – 1979 and between the big campaigns and even during the two bitter wars, literacy classes were kept up helping those deprived of formal education at school to become literate.

In the course of the development of literacy, post-literacy learning needs were solved in accordance with the specific conditions of each stage — firstly the formation of the primary popular education classes for neo-literates, and then the initial secondary education classes for the young people who had to give up their formal education to take part in the resistance war. In 1948 – 1954, in spite of the harsh conditions of the bitter war, thousands of people annually attended literacy classes in the liberated zones and resistance bases.

In 1954, when peace was restored after the first resistance war, the national re-construction urgently called for the speedy training of a contingent of employees and workers with a high technical background. This led to the formation of schools and classes of complementary education for young people, workers, farmers and

demobilized armymen. In 1960–61, the first complementary education (CE) curricula and textbooks were compiled for all 3 levels (first level — primary education, 2nd and 3rd levels — secondary education).

In 1968, the Centre for the Compilation of CE curricula and textbooks was set up, and in 1969 – 1975 with its tremendous efforts, new curricula textbooks were formulated and applied. The system of CE schools and classes was further consolidated and developed.

In 1975 – 1979, parallel to the launching of a large-scale literacy campaign, another system of CE schools and classes was established in the South.

And since 1980 the CE workers of Vietnam have been provided with opportunities to get in touch and hold exchanges with their colleagues in the region. At the same time, the socio-economic changes in the country have posed a lot of problems for education, especially adult education. Re-structuring the complementary education of Vietnam is now an irresistible trend.

And in order to implement this re-structuring of CE, it is necessary to assess the achievements and short-comings in the whole course of its activity.

## Achievements

These are the achievements of CE during the last decades:

1. Making a major contribution to literacy and enlightenment by helping millions of people attain the three R's and the most fundamental educational background to be better involved in the course of socio-economic development; and, on the other

hand, helping train a contingent of employees and workers who have played an active role in social life and production in their localities over recent years.

2. Establishing a literacy and CE machinery with a whole brigade of experienced and zealous officers and instructors from the centre down to grassroots.
3. Accumulating positive experience and compiling a variety of curricula, textbooks and materials for both learners and instructors.

Nevertheless, shortcomings have been established in the movement, revealing certain weaknesses in theory and in practical guidance, notably:

- a) The contents of learning and forms of organization of learning have far from satisfied the needs of the learners and have left much to be desired. They have not conformed to the learner's conditions and capabilities, hence they have failed to arouse, maintain and develop their interest in learning.
- b) The material premises are poor, lacking in minimum technical facilities to keep up the teaching and learning.
- c) The literacy and CE officers and instructors have not been fundamentally trained, most of them having been taught to work at regular schools for children, and their understanding of what they have to do is based chiefly on intuitive experience.
- d) The literacy and CE study, planning, organization, implementation, training and evaluation have met with lots of difficulties, hence the unsatisfactory outcome and failure to meet with the requirements of the learners, the localities and the grassroots.

As a matter of fact, the first problem mentioned above has been dealt with more than once. The literacy and CE workers have realized for a long time that conformity to the targets is a decisive factor in the success of adult education. All of its improvements to content and methods of learning have focused on the extent of conformity to the targets. However, this has not been settled radically. The main obstacle lies in the fact that a simple conception of adult education remains, which has extracted itself from the profound influence of the ready-made models of general traditional education. This is the very reason why for quite a long time now the CE forms and contents of learning have the mono-linear system of grades and classes, an exact copy of the system of general education for children.

## Perspectives

Based on the above-mentioned perception and with a wish to put CE to better use for the socio-economic development of the nation, a project for the re-adjustment of CE activities has been elaborated with the following fundamental guidelines:

1. As a component of the strategy for the enhancement of the quality of the social workforce, education should help promote, within the framework of conditions available, the dynamism and creativeness of the Vietnamese working man, with a view to the goals of socio-economic development with his own happiness as the principal goal.

To this goal, the national education is to grow into a diversified and continual system, in conformity and satisfaction of the current demands, capable of self-adjustment to constantly act as a stimulant to the socio-economic development.

In such an educational system, the presence of an informal educational mini-system parallel to the formal one is a »must«, which is aimed at an extensive and intensive development of education for those who are deprived of formal education at schools.

2. To implement the functions of the nonformal education system, the CE is to gradually switch its operation from an educational service designed to quickly raise the educational background of officers, employees and young workers and farmers and quickly form a brigade of leading cadres and managerial officers in localities and grassroots (hence its high priority to these targets) over to one capable of meeting the constant learning needs of the working people, particularly the disadvantaged and the deprived, in the execution of their right and obligation to education, with a view to helping them increase their capabilities of active participation in socio-economic development, improving the quality of their personal and family life and fulfilling their civic duties and functions as working men.

The process of re-adjustment is to take into account the rationale of democratization with practical contents, varied forms of learning procedures, and management under rational gradation so that anyone who has needs, conditions and abilities can voluntarily participate in the learning activity, choosing for himself an appropriate content and form of learning in the designed system so as to raise his educational and intellectual background to live and work better.

3. Specific CE goals and tasks are:

- a) Reducing the incidence of illiteracy gradually advancing to complete abolition of illiteracy and raising the minimum educational background of the entire population.

- b) Organizing forms of teaching and learning without grades and classes, thus helping the adult working class to attain popular understanding in culture, science-technology, but first and foremost, the necessary understanding related to vocations and social life.
- c) Organizing forms of teaching and learning with grades and classes to meet the learning needs of the young people who are not in a position to attend general education schools.

#### 4. CE target groups:

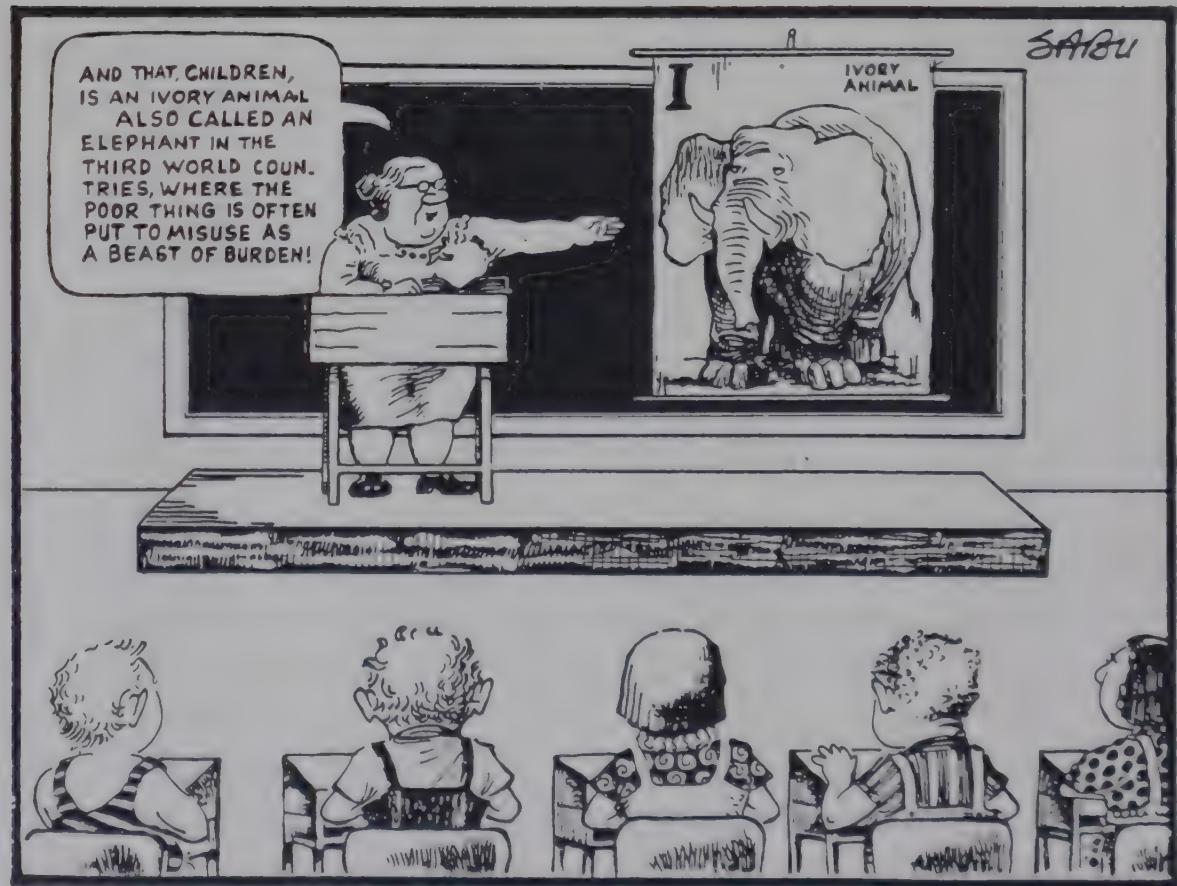
- a) Illiterates not in the primary education age-bracket.
- b) Literate working people who have a desire to broaden their knowledge, know-how and skills in their vocations and social life.
- c) Young people who are not in a position to attend general education schools.

The process of CE innovation is to embark upon a continual re-adjustment on the basis of study, analysis of the situation and consideration of all the CE guidelines in force, with the maintenance of rational factors, revision of the irrational and elimination of the outdated. However, it should not be a patchwork affair but proceed along the definite lines of a project for CE innovation.

In order to attain a really effective project for CE innovation and satisfy the demands of the new situation, attention should be paid to the following points:

- a. Summing up the experience in literacy and CE activity, with reference to the experience and theory of adult education from foreign countries, first of all the nations in the region.

- b. Clearly identifying the functions, tasks, goals and structures of the CE system, and previewing the orientation for CE development in the last ten years of this century.
- c. Defining the outline on the contents of learning and methods.
- d. Formulating a system of provisions on organization and machinery with special emphasis on improving the modes of development of contributions from individuals, non-governmental bodies and other educational organizations.
- e. Importance should be attached to training qualified personnel and CE officers and instructors in both theory and practice.



*We welcome the continuation of the debate on the complex issue of literacy which we have encouraged again and again through numerous articles in earlier volumes. Rosa María Torres wrote this article during International Literacy Year and during her time as Educational Director of the National Literacy Campaign »Monseñor Leonidas Proaño of Ecuador«.*

**Rosa María Torres**

## **Who is illiterate?**

Most people consider this question to have a simple answer: illiterates are people who can neither read nor write. However, the problem is substantially more complex. Much remains to be analyzed and discussed about the definitions of »literacy« and »illiteracy«.

To start with, it is necessary to bear in mind that for the purpose of census records and official statistics, illiteracy is reduced to the category of »absolute illiteracy«, counting as »illiterate« only those individuals who declare themselves as such. People who can recognize the letters of the alphabet or who know how to write their

own name, however, often do not consider themselves to be illiterate, and consequently do not claim to be such for statistics.

The very notion of »illiteracy« is imprecise, and contributes to the confusion. The word defines a person in terms of deficiency (the lack of literacy), implicitly assuming that whoever knows and can work with the alphabet possesses the capacity to read and write. But this is clearly not the case. Many people know the alphabet by heart without knowing how to read or write. Francisca Naula, a woman who participated in a recent literacy campaign, told me, »When I was little, I memorised the alphabet. I could look at the letters and say 'M' and 'A'. I was told that I had to connect the two letters to say 'MA', but I didn't understand. It wasn't worth anything to know the alphabet because I couldn't read.«

Moreover, the notion of »literacy« is customarily associated with the lack of schooling. A person who never attended school is automatically considered »illiterate«, and one who did attend, »literate«. Nevertheless, this is not strictly the case. On the one hand, there are persons who learn to read and write on their own, with the help of a family member or a friend, investing great effort and considerable autodidactic energy. On the other hand, school attendance and even a completed primary school career are not necessarily guarantees for learning how to read and write. Many investigations and evaluations have been conducted in this connection which go to prove the inefficacy of schools to transmit literacy not just in our own country, but also in Latin America and all over the world.

Knowing how to read is not simply knowing how to recognize and mechanically decipher a group of letters: it implies being able to correctly comprehend what is read. Knowing how to write is not just knowing how to write one's name, or being able to copy a text or take down dictation: it implies being able to clearly and correctly express one's own ideas in writing. Consequently, the measure

between the concept of being »illiterate« and that of being »literate« is not just rote memorization of the alphabet, but a lengthy process of acquiring a command of the written language in different ways and on different levels. There are those who accordingly maintain that to some degree all of us are illiterate, because we are continuously perfecting our capacity to read and write comprehensively.

All the above leads us to identify the problem of illiteracy not just in census statistics or among those who never went to school, but in the very heart of our so-called »literate« population, even in university lecture halls. Ask any university professor and you will hear the recurrent complaint: many students arrive at the university without being able to write a theme, with serious difficulties in understanding the principle ideas of a text. This is what is called »functional illiteracy«.

On a world level today, »functional illiteracy« would seem to be of even greater magnitude than »absolute illiteracy«. During the past few years countries as highly developed as the USA, Germany, England or France have begun to discover that they have millions of youth and adults who have attained a »formal literacy level« in the school system, but who, in reality, can neither comprehend what they read, nor express themselves in writing. What can you expect of our society, where we have not even begun to become aware of that situation, and where no studies yet exist to help determine the magnitude of the problem?

At any event it is certain that the lack of knowledge and understanding of this vast and involved problem of illiteracy has ill-fated consequences. One is the narrow and negative judgements usually surrounding illiteracy and the very condition of the illiterate person. In connection with illiteracy we are accustomed to hearing expressions like »social anathema«, »scourge«, »malady« »harrowing reality«, »plague«, and even »vice«. We speak of »eradicating« il-

literacy as if it were an epidemic or sickness. The illiterate person is described with adjectives like »blind«, »cultural defendant«, »unfortunate illiterate«, etc., evoking the image of someone who is ignorant, disabled or handicapped, and not that of a normal person characterized by the simple fact that he does not know how to read or write.

The illiterate person becomes the object of shame and guilt for being illiterate, not the society which permits and repeats this form of social injustice. In like manner, it is the student who is deemed incapable of learning or not appreciative of reading and writing, and not the educational system, which, by the grace of its methods, is able to convert learning into a tedious and sterile task, instead of the real challenge it should be, full of creativity, discovery, pleasure and fun.



*The impact of literacy is an issue of concern for all involved in adult education and development. The article is a small excerpt from an evaluation study on the retention and use of literacy and the empowerment of women, based on adult education programmes in Delhi. Hans Raj Gugnani, Chief Consultant, and Som. Dikshit work for the Educational Consultants Consortium (ECC), CF4, Sona Industrial Estate, 389, G.T. Karnal Road, Delhi 110033, India.*

**Hans Raj Gugnani / Som. D. Dikshit**

## **Evaluation on literacy and the empowerment of women**

### **Objective**

Among the issues of concern to the policy-makers and executives of adult education programmes in India, as elsewhere, mention may be made of the following two:

1. Relapse of neo-literate adults into illiteracy, resulting in wastage of scarce resources; and

## 2. the role of adult education in enhancing the »Status« of Women.

The National Literacy Mission (NLM), established in India in 1987, therefore rightly underpinned the importance of:

- a) imparting wholesome, functional and retainable literacy for use and application by neo-literate adults in their day-to-day life, thereby minimising their chances of relapsing into illiteracy; and
- b) using literacy education as an agent of basic change in the »Status« of women and in playing an interventionist role in the empowerment of women.

The NLM, always eager to have remedial feed-back on various aspects of adult education programmes in different parts of India, by way of systematic evaluation, assigned evaluation studies on the aforesaid two aspects of the programme viz.,

- Retention and use of literacy; and
- Empowerment of women;

to the Educational Consultants Consortium (ECC), New Delhi, India.

### **Scope and methodology**

Both evaluation studies were to be based on the adult education programme in the whole of the Union Territory of Delhi i.e. the capital of India including the urban slums and rural/semi-urban areas and were aimed at assessing in total the entire adult education programme comprising projects run by the local government, voluntary organisations and universities/colleges. While in the area of »retention and use of literacy skills« with the objective of

achieving self-reliance in literacy and numeracy, several studies had been undertaken at different localities in the past, no systematic evaluation study on the »Empowerment of women« had been attempted anywhere in India. The ECC accepted the challenging, yet well-considered, opportunity to explore a maiden field. Comprehensive, inter-acting evaluation tools were devised, which included testing and diagnostic questionnaires, individualised practical exercises, discussions and clinical conversations to assess qualitative aspects of personality development. The clinical and qualitative nature of the study on the »Empowerment of women« necessitated identification of a Control Group of illiterate women (571) of the same age-group (15 – 35 years) living and working in the same project areas, influenced more or less by the same impact of mass-media and interactive situations (in-formal education) as the Experimental Group of neo-literate women (1393). While the study on »Empowerment of women« reflected the position by comparison between the neo-literate adult women with the illiterate ones, it was not left there. Even the position of illiterate adult women of the »Control Group« itself was assessed in relation to »before« and »after« their migration to Delhi during the last three years. This showed how »informal education«, such as a metropolis like Delhi offers can change the personality development of the migrants without an organised non-formal adult education programme. The illiterate women identified for the »Control group« came mostly therefore from families which had migrated to Delhi from other States during the last 3 years in search of jobs or any form of self-employment.

The respondents for both the studies were not 'captive learners' but 'scattered and unattached' neo-literate's (2008 men and women), applying their newly acquired skills in everyday life situations. The field investigators (19) covered a catchment area of 575 sq. miles. Their approach being mutually cooperative and participatory, speeded up the process. The Study took 13 months to complete (April 1989 to April 1990), mainly due to the large sample,

the size of the area covered and the specific difficulties encountered in evaluating the part of the study relating to the empowerment of women.

One of the difficult tasks in the study concerning the »Empowerment of women« was the designing of tools for attempting quantification of an otherwise qualitative subject-matter, for which the possible indicators had to be related to the sources of power. Thus, apart from the acquisition, retention and use of literacy skills which empower women, other sources of power, particular to women, and ingrained in the Adult Education Programme, had to be identified. In doing so, distinction had to be made between the programme elements that 'benefitted' women and those that 'empowered' women, just as a distinction is made between the welfare-oriented programmes that view women as »beneficiaries« (e.g. nutrition, primary health, family planning, child care etc.) and the production-oriented programmes that view women as »producers«. Keeping these considerations in mind, several objectively quantifiable parameters were developed for evaluating the aspect of the adult education programme relating to the »Empowerment of women«.

## Findings

For the evaluation of this aspect, the study is based on the comparative analysis of the responses between (i) the »Experimental group« of neo-literates, adult women who had attended the adult education programme; and (ii) the »Control group« of illiterate adult women who had not attended the programme.

The contributory role of adult education in empowering women towards the goal of women's equality — one of the objectives of the National Literacy Mission (NLM) — has been indicated in the findings revealed by the study. The NLM assumed that, through par-

ticipation in the adult education programme, there would be an increase in the status of women.

1. While, in most of the cases, the assumptions of the NLM have been confirmed by the Study, there are also clear indications of some areas where the role of adult education has been marginal or even negligible. Take for example the area of skill-learning: the position of neo-literates is marginally better than that of the illiterate women. Home-making skills are equally popular with both groups. About three-quarters of the women in both groups, have been trying or thinking of acquiring one or other income-generating skills due to economic pressure. Economic pressure rather than adult education, is the real contributory factor for women taking up skill-learning in order to gain extra income for their families. This also shows there is effective demand for supplementation of income-generating learning skills with the literacy learning skills at the adult education centres for women. This could also be a strong motivational factor for attracting women to the literacy centres. Besides, a positive relationship exists between learning literacy skills and handicraft skills, as skill-learning like literacy learning, contributes towards a positive self-image, economic independence, rise in living standards and bringing about social change.
2. Again, literacy learning has also not contributed to improving job prospects for neo-literate women. On the contrary, the scales are weighed more in favour of illiterate women who, according to their responses, got better jobs owing to their experience and training.
3. Literacy learning has also not given any extra mileage to the neo-literate women as far as their positive attitudes towards cleanliness and family planning are concerned. In fact, in both these areas, illiterate women had an edge over the neo-literate

rates: 96.48% as opposed to 91.30% in matters of cleanliness; and 92.46% as opposed to 88.8% in awareness about small family norms. In both these areas, the powerful influence of extensive publicity through media and day-to-day social interactions, more than adult education, have had a decisive impact on attitudinal changes among women, whether neo-literate or illiterate.

4. A few other interesting revelations of the Study where little or no variations among the neo-literates and illiterate women were visible included the following: In sending children to school there is virtually no distinction of treatment of sons or daughters made in the groups.
5. Literacy has not contributed in moulding the opinion of husbands towards vices like gambling, drinking, smoking etc. as 59.92% neo-literates and 59.70% illiterates received little regard and respect by their husbands.
6. More illiterate women than neo-literates (76.59% as opposed to 73.43%) showed awareness for safeguards against exploitation with regard to commodities purchased (weights, measures etc.).
7. Again, slightly more illiterate women (87.77%) than neo-literate women (86.22%) responded positively in matters of maintaining household accounts, the one difference being the possession of additional skills, such as keeping a written record of family accounts by the neo-literate women. The illiterates kept a mental account. So too, in the management of family income, the illiterate women (56.98%) exceed the neo-literate women (50.71%). Surprisingly, the illiterate women depend more on control of expenditure, management of funds and savings.
8. However, in all other areas of investigation covered by the Study, the impact of the adult education programme in em-

powering women is clearly visible. Almost in all the Projects, neo-literate women feel that their attendance of adult education centres have contributed towards their confidence building. Self-confidence helped the neo-literates towards better mobility, expression, understanding, accepting responsibility, desire to get their children educated, arriving at quick decisions etc.

9. Decision making and rational thinking are more common among neo-literates. Neo-literates (73.28%) and illiterate women (64.94%) expressed better say in the family matters. Positive self-image of illiterate women has individualistic reasons, but neo-literates attending adult education classes have played a definite positive role. Better expression by 83.05% neo-literates was a result of attending adult education classes and for 61.95% illiterate women a result of the impact of knowledge gained by living in the company of educated persons.
10. As regards self-confidence, neo-literates (37.87%) and experienced illiterate women (27.86%) feel they have enhanced their bargaining power. Again a larger percentage of neo-literates (57.39%) as compared to illiterate women (39.17%) feel that they provide confidence as companions of other women in the locality. Besides, more neo-literates (43.37%) than illiterate women (26.94%) derive benefits from child care and women's welfare programmes. Neo-literates (52.90%) and illiterates (33.15%) feel better prepared to run their own shop etc. — an indication of self-confidence as also a move towards economic independence and the wish to increase their economic productivity in calculable terms. More neo-literates (62.09%) than illiterates (54.90%), as contributors to the family income, have indicated ability to keep better control of husband's expenditure and to maintain their own economic independence.

11. Literacy has helped to remove many earlier handicaps e.g. facing outsiders, problems of children, behaviour of husbands and maintaining the household. The positive response of neo-literates was almost double that of the illiterates in all the four areas studied. Neo-literates exhibited a positive self image and a lot of self-confidence while illiterate women preferred cooperation to confrontation in dealing with their husbands. Saving through banks was practiced more by neo-literates (51.08%) than by illiterates (30.99%). Neo-literates (61.56%) and illiterates (32.74%) revealed an image of boldness in decision making and acting thereon.

12. The rights of women deserve a better deal in curricula, training of functionaries and teaching-learning programmes at the adult education centre. Awareness is the first step in encouraging group action for social change.

Some of the selected areas where adult education programmes have not contributed towards the empowerment of women are graphically depicted in the following pages.

### **Remedial feed-back**

Skills training, if combined with literacy training at the adult education centres, should be a large motivating factor with regard to enrolment of women. However, it is the »skill-knowing« i.e. awareness about different skill training activities and knowing about possibilities of upgrading skills already learnt, that form part of the adult education programme for women. In this context, the Study revealed that those women who already knew some functional skills were better motivated towards learning literacy skills as well. For the building-up of group cohesion and participation in group-action, the adult education centres should exploit the possibility of mutual learning of skills amongst the learners. This is

a more convenient possibility in the absence of any planned programme of functional development through the adult education centres.

However, literacy learning, as such, has not contributed to improvement of job prospects, even though it has helped in personality development in several other ways. For instance, it is evident that attending literacy classes helps to build a positive self-image through development of ability to take their own decisions in family matters e.g. their children's education; in earning a livelihood; in controlling household expenditure etc. Again, it is revealed that about five-sixths of the neo-literate women (83.05%) as opposed to three-quarters of the illiterate women (61.95%) feel that they can express themselves better than before; i.e. the former (as compared to »before« joining the adult education centres) and the latter »before« migrating to Delhi. The curriculum-content and teaching-learning methods at the adult education centres should place special emphasis on personality development input because of its proven impact on the learners.

Another area which should be given special attention at the adult education centre is to encourage learners' participation in the local welfare centres for women and children. Attending adult education centres has definitely contributed to a higher percentage of women (43.37%) attending women and child welfare centres as opposed to 26.94% illiterate women. Greater emphasis here is bound to increase this further because of the inherent potential in these types of beneficial activities. Another area that needs more emphasis and discussion at the Adult Education Centres is education for children.

Although the trend gives a healthy picture of little distinction being made between the male and female child with regard to sending them to school, there are still some (even though a small per-

tage i.e. 6.6% among neo-literates) who remain un-convinced about the benefits of sending their children to school.

Among the subjects that need comprehensive discussion at the adult education centres, particularly as far as women are concerned, is the topic »the right to vote«. The study, no doubt, shows some awareness among neo-literates (40.12%) as opposed to illiterates (29.59%) who consider the voting process helpful. But from the varying reasons given on »how the right to franchise is helpful« it is obvious that there is a lack of clarity of the concept among both groups. The meaningful and well-directed discussions of this subject by the instructors, supplemented with suitable teaching-learning materials is highly desirable. Similar awareness among women about their rights needs special attention at both the literacy and post-literacy stages. Even though the Study reveals that literacy has helped women to become acquainted with their rights in factories, at home, about equal salary for equal work etc., a large percentage of »I Do Not Know« responses in both the groups, point out the need for special attention of this topic.

The women, in general, appear to be heading towards action in order to change the existing exploitative order. The position of neo-literates has been positively far better than the illiterates in regard to the number of pre-literacy handicaps discussed in the study. Roughly about two-thirds of the neo-literates feel that adult education has been helpful in removing handicaps faced earlier, as opposed to one-third of the illiterate women. The rationalisation given by the responses, in the case of neo-literates, show a lot of positive image and self-confidence, attained through adult education. However, there are still a few areas where neo-literate women are victims of exploitation, as for instance, by traders through short weights and measures; by husbands paying little regard to their wives' views and resistance towards vices such as gambling, drinking, smoking etc. These topics could form the basis of lively

discussion at the adult education centres for both men and women.

## Limitations

The findings of this Study are typical of a metropolis with a fast expanding urban/semi-urban population, overdosed with mass media and increasing opportunities of social inter action. Accordingly, the entire Union Territory of Delhi today, is hardly representative of the vast rural populations in all other States and Union Territories of India. The findings of this Study, based on the Adult Education Programme in Delhi might therefore be substantially different from a similar study conducted in areas having predominantly rural populations. Perhaps another study, based on Adult Education Programmes in predominantly rural areas, on the themes of the present Study, would be desirable.



»Of course I have a car. What I don't have is a road to run on.«

Laxman/Bombay

*This manuscript also relates to International Literacy Year 1990. Expectations were high — we now can look at the results. Jesus Balhen A. works at CREFAL, Patzcuaro, Michoacan, Mexico.*

**Jesus Balhen A.**

## **Notes on literacy efforts for 1990 — Criticism and reflexions**

We are already well into the »International Literacy Year«. As can be expected, the countries of the third world will be stepping up efforts to meet expectations of new programmes and projects or of more aggressive action within those already existing.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of those efforts will boil down to a taking stock, a critical analysis of how they have been focused or channelled. For this purpose it might be convenient to point out some essential elements upon which to reflect. To name a few:

## 1. Motivation

A literacy campaign in which the aims simply correspond with its semantic definition is destined to produce results which are scanty, ephemeral, and practically fruitless, as was the case in various countries not so long ago despite statistics that attempt to prove the contrary.

There is no doubt that literacy campaigns only rarely if ever generate incentives »per se«. Hence the yields do not correspond with the efforts invested. It should not be forgotten that the potential beneficiaries of a programme are far from able to plainly and simply perceive on intuition its possible benefits, its tangible and practical utility. Consequently — as has been recommended over the past thirty years — every programme or service to promote literacy should include, or be integrated within diversified projects aimed at economic, civic and sociocultural development of the group, the community and its individuals. They achieve better living conditions and incentives for liberty, critical thinking, participation and progress.

## 2. Administration

The programmes, apart from exceptions in half a dozen Latin American countries, (very few are those of a really technical-innovative character) are conceived in an improvised, routine, traditional manner disregarding the majority of aspects which constitute the logical sequence of administration, namely:

- Diagnostic investigation
- Planning
- Programming
- Systematic implementation
- Control mechanisms: supervision, evaluation, and follow-up

- Coordination and
- Systematization.

Naturally, the participation and contributions of the community itself are indispensable in performing these tasks (as is the case in the majority of programmes carried out by NGO's). Here it is absolutely necessary to be able to reckon with principles, goals, objectives and general content on the macro, or national level, as well as on the micro level, or that of the subregion in its physical, sociological and cultural aspects, and specifically — this must be stressed — of the beneficiaries themselves taken collectively as a group.

## **Staff training**

The members of the staff, who, in their various capacities, and in the fulfillment of their tasks, are considered to be the agent in the process of promoting literacy; also constitute a key factor for decision-making in the course of programmes, the development of projects and the lending of services. This applies even more where volunteers are concerned.

Directorial personnel, planners and programmers, coordinators or intermediaries in the development of curricula — with the participation of the sector, the community and the beneficiaries — designers and writers of teaching materials, motivators, supervisors, promotional staff, and last not least the teaching staff itself, require — and this is axiomatic — meticulous preparation, careful training and further along, specialization.

## 4. Methodology

It is necessary to distinguish general methodology from that which is didactical: The former, which is of capital importance, has to do with the entire »modus operandi« of a programme or project, and refers as a whole to policies, principles, goals, norms and techniques, including their tendencies, strategies and clearly defined tactics.

There is no need for a closer examination of general methodology, as in several Latin American countries programmes have received adequate treatment in this respect. The same does not apply to didactical methodology, the standards of which seem to be progressively deteriorating since 1971 in Latin America where they are marked with anarchy, improvisation and even ignorance (with exceptions), without taking into account that the retention and progress of the »beneficiaries« of a programme depends to a great extent on didactics.

Unless the methods employed in the process of teaching conform with the interests, needs and specific expectations of the participants, unless they are consistent with their own capabilities, in particular, with their rhythm of progress, and unless they are completely mastered by the teachers, failure will be inevitable. Such failure will irremediably be manifested in a notable drop in attendance and subsequently in total desertion!

## 5. Elaboration of materials

One aspect which follows from the preceding concerns the materials necessary for developing and furthering the process. The materials and audiovisual aids must, of course, correspond with the didactical methods, and must likewise be available in abundant variety, considering that the diversity of the materials

provides the best possible condition for adapting adequately to the idiosyncrasies of the subjects, their surroundings and circumstances.

## 6. Supervision and evaluation

These areas are weak spots in programmes promoting literacy. It is regrettable that in general they tend to go unnoticed, to be treated superficially, held to be unnecessary, that their »implementation« is improvised and assigned to unqualified personnel, in short that they are not given the consideration they merit, neither from an administrative nor from an academic viewpoint.

The omission or negation of these aspects is dissipated for various reasons: some are objective and real (e.g. a shortage of resources), but more often they are just simulated as pretexts with the intention of justifying the disregard of the importance of such indispensable functions (supervision and evaluation) which deserve to be treated as the spinal cord of programmes, projects and services.

Indeed, pretexts are used as subterfuge with the aim — in the majority of cases — of covering up, or hiding the inoperability or inefficiency of the system, the lack of attendance of participants, the anomalies or irregularities in the functioning of a particular literacy center, or rather the lack or absence of a service whose »existence« is merely recorded in deceiving statistics, as the author of this article was able to confirm during field studies conducted in various countries.

## 7. Follow-up

The continuation of a programme or service in the promotion of literacy, in practice more commonly known as »post literacy programmes«, must be planned or anticipated way in advance of the initiation of the first efforts towards literacy. Otherwise, the results will be the same as in almost all campaigns and ill-named »programmes«, whether or not they have been put into practice with massive or selective strategies.

Conferences, seminars and other such events, whether international or national, as well as the teachings of regional centers such as CREFAL, or multinational organizations for adult education (CREA, CEMUL, PEIEA, FESIED to name a few Latin American organizations) have demonstrated the imperativeness of utilizing every means possible to ensure systematic follow-up in the literacy process in order to avoid losing educational gains, and to prevent the vain investment of so many resources and efforts when sooner than later »new literates« begin to show lamentable signs of regression.

There are various examples which exist in the Region. One, which is worth mentioning and which seems to be representative as far as systematic continuity is concerned, is the National Programme for Education of Adults in Colombia (conducted by the Ministry of Education) in which, beginning with February 1970 in conformity with its »Initial Five-Year Plan for Adult Education 1970 – 1974«, literacy services were supplanted by the establishment of »the National Programme for Functional Elementary Education« conceived in five phases of 465 periods each (equivalent to elementary education, but completable within five consecutive school semesters), and following a curriculum of its own prepared specifically for adults.

This initiative, promulgated under National Decree No 378 of 1970, not only far surpassed the unstable or irregular »literacy programmes«; it also ensured continual education for persons beyond the age of 13, enabling them to pursue studies and attain an education at the basic level (with an appropriate curriculum), as well as at the intermediate and even higher level.

From its initiation, that system produced satisfactory results (as has been verified in evaluations) and was promising in its perspectives. Despite the fact that it remains in effect in all the states or departments of the Republic, it did not receive the support it required, due to the fact that precisely at the beginning of 1975, after 16 years, in disregard of its attractive and innovative methods, Colombia reverted to the traditional »literacy campaigns«.

Experts in the matter and opponents of such strategies affirm that the »campaigns« conducted in the majority of countries do not yield the anticipated results despite the investment of considerable resources; further, that in general such campaigns are not conducted precisely in pursuance of educational goals as much as of other goals: those of partisan politics, which carry out campaigns to »erradicate illiteracy« as a matter of show for their own public justification.

## **Conclusion**

We must not forget that although an »International Literacy Year« has been agreed upon, this is only the beginning of a decade during which governments, institutions, associations, businesses, committees, groups, individuals, etc. should combine forces and

strive together not only to diminish illiteracy, but also to achieve better »Education for all in the countries of the Third World!«

**»International Literacy Year«**

*Let us learn to read. Let us learn to write.*

*But even more let us learn  
to always live in peace!*

Deutsche Stiftung für internationale Entwicklung

German Foundation for International Development



## Culture and Environment in Primary Education

The Demands of the Curriculum and the Practice in Schools in Sub-Saharan Africa

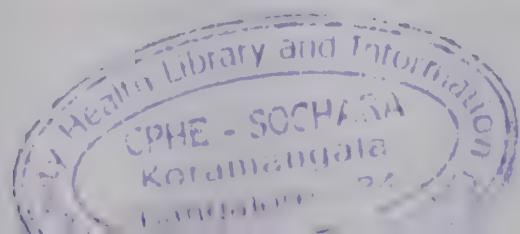
by Udo Bude (ed.)



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**ZED**



*For a long time now we have been trying to publish something on the relationship of cooperative and adult education work. We are also interested in providing some follow-up. This article is a brief summary of conclusions drawn by Emmanuel Fiagbey in his dissertation for the M.Ed. (Adult and Community Education) degree at the University of Glasgow, Scotland. E.D.K. Fiagbey is principal organisor of the regional office in Ho, Institute of Adult Education, University of Ghana, Ho, Ghana.*

**Emmanuel D.K. Fiagbey**

## **Community co-operatives and adult education: Lessons from the developed and the developing world**

The practice of education in its various forms plays an important role in the development of co-operatives. This is particularly so judging from the fact that as co-operation is a dynamic activity, it requires of those who wish to practice it effectively »the acceptance of new ideas, new standards of conduct, new habits of thought and behaviour based on the superior values of co-operative association« (ILO). Continuing Education as one of the main principles of

co-operative practice therefore provides the opportunity to view adult education as an activity that goes beyond the formal school system. It includes less formal curricular activities, use of media, effective analysis of current and future needs of individuals and groups. In practice, it must be immediately applicable to the problems and challenges that co-operators face in their daily operations.

### **The target groups**

For effective adult education within the co-operatives, the following target groups have been identified: Secretaries and Administrative Managers; Members of Management Committees; General Membership. Unfortunately the problem of ineffective education for these groups of co-operators seems to be common to many societies. As revealed in this study, for instance, no serious attempts were made in the years 1984 – 1989 to organise any structured educational programmes for these groups of co-operators in the Volta Region by the responsible educational agencies, the Co-operative Council and the Department of Co-operatives. Poor staffing, particularly of the Co-operative Council, was noted as the main cause.

This problem of inadequate staffing was also found in the Western Isles where the ACE-HI (Association of Community Enterprises in the Highlands and Islands), the counterpart of the Ghanaian Co-operative Council, has only one Projects and Training Officer with the specific task of computer training. Considering the geographical set-up of the Islands and the isolated location of the community co-operatives, this was highly inadequate.

## The providing agencies

Apart from the Co-operative Council and the Department of Co-operatives, other institutions, capable of drawing up educational programmes for the co-operatives have also been found. The Institute of Adult Education of the University of Ghana is one such institution and its experimental work in the development of a Women Potters' Co-operative at Kpando and a Beekeepers' Co-operative at Adaklu was an apt demonstration of that capability.

In the Western Isles, on the other hand, ACE-HI was found to be the only agency responsible for the education of the co-operators. Considering the existence of a multiplicity of adult educational organisations in Scotland however, including the University Departments, it would be useful to tap the potential and resources of institutions such as the Centre for Co-operative Education, established within the Department of Adult and Continuing Education of the University of Glasgow. The important factor, however, is the creation of awareness of such institutions to enable the co-operators make use of their services.

In their zeal to promote education within the co-operatives, providers with their expertise might be tempted to undermine the autonomy of the societies and thereby manipulate them into behaving like affiliated bodies to the educational agency. The danger posed by this situation is that members of the particular co-operative society might lose their initiative to develop their own independent programmes which may be more relevant to their needs than those which the expert may recommend. It might also lead to infighting among the educational agencies over who »possesses« which society and who should have the right to determine the direction in which the particular society should move.

To avoid this situation the providing agencies could rather aim at helping the co-operatives to develop their own corps of educators.

As mentioned earlier, the Volta Region Co-operatives have the Co-operative Council as their educational body while the Western Isles Co-Chomunn have ACE-HI to provide this service. These organisations need to be strengthened with adequate numbers of properly trained staff not only in co-operative development and management but also in the development and organisation of adult educational programmes for their societies.

A more crucial option which meets the immediate needs of the co-operators however is that they could contract with the providing agencies for courses. By this process the co-operatives arrange the courses and bring in the expertise and are thus better poised to control them. This could involve programmes connected with the training of trainers for the societies or programmes directly established for the co-operators or their officials. In running such courses efforts should be made by the experts to maintain meaningful participation by avoiding the temptation of imposing ideas on the participants. A careful assessment of the needs of the societies before setting up the courses would also be helpful in avoiding this situation.

Finally, the experts should be ready to listen to the participants in their programmes and provide room for the ideas of the common co-operators to flourish.

## **The adult education programmes**

The programmes of the ACE-HE included: A 3 Day Annual Conference during which series of workshops on various topics related to the operations of the community co-operatives were discussed; Self Study Packages on Community Co-operative practice for Management Committee members and Business Managers; Publication and circulation of an annual magazine (Community

Enterprises); and an eight page quarterly newspaper (Highlands and Islands Community Enterprise News).

In the Volta Region efforts at effective planning and execution of educational programmes were identified in One Day Schools organised by the Institute of Adult Education for the Potters' Co-operative at Kpandu, the Beekeepers' Co-operative at Adaklu and the Farmers' Co-operative at Klefe. The Regional Co-operative Council and the Department of Co-operatives on the other hand depended more on informal meetings and discussions with co-operators rather than specifically structured educational activities.

In view of this background, it might be suggested that Weekend Conferences, Seminars and Workshops might be useful generally while Self Study Packages might be helpful in remote and scattered literate communities such as in the Western Isles. Rural newspapers and radio programmes with space for activities directed to the co-operatives could be used. In this respect, co-operators may be encouraged to congregate themselves into readers' and listeners' clubs. The co-operatives through their central unions may also establish their own newspapers as started by the Association of Community Enterprises in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. This could be a useful medium for membership education if circulation is extended to all shareholders and the community at large.

## **Literacy**

In the Volta Region where a large percentage of the co-operators studied (65 – 95%) are illiterate, the use of the newspaper can only be relevant if a concerted literacy campaign is undertaken with the co-operatives. In practice, this would first require the creation of a corps of literacy facilitators for the various societies or clusters of societies as may become necessary for the sake of arriving at

teachable numbers. Elementary school teachers and other literates in the various societies could therefore be identified and trained to assume this role. This training which should be financially sponsored by the various co-operatives should enable the participants to set up classes for the members of the societies in their localities. To ensure continuity however, these classes should be linked with the regional network of literacy groups under the supervision of the Department of Community Development.

In adopting the functional approach to literacy in these classes, reading and writing should be organised around simple processes related to the day-to-day operations of the co-operators as farmers, potters, distillers etc. It should also be built upon themes related to banking processes such as saving money, withdrawing money, signing cheques, applying for loans and so on. Special emphasis should therefore be placed on numeracy within the context of recording capital, costs, expenditures, sales, purchases, profits and losses — processes which co-operators have to reckon with in their daily transactions.

A functional literacy programme of this nature would therefore be necessary as a key means of ensuring equal and active participation by all members in the co-operatives and also of making the individual co-operators more effective in their work.

### **Special programmes for women**

Among the general membership, women could be further identified as a special group for education. Even though they do not form a majority proportion of the membership of the co-operatives (Volta Region 1:2, Western Isles 2:1), their role as the main providers of health care and support within the family and as frontliners in the mobilization of the people for communal work, especially in the Volta Region, justifies this special attention.

That education can enable women to play a more active role in the organisation and management of the co-operatives has been amply demonstrated in the Western Isles where 83.3% of the managers/esses and 66.6% of the secretaries in the six co-operatives studied are women who were able to fit into these positions because of their level of education.

1. The case in the Volta Region where no woman held the position of secretary or manageress in any of the seven mixed co-operatives studied, stresses the need for this method of conceptualising education.
2. Programmes for women must therefore encompass training in leadership and organisational and management skills to enable them to play a more active part in the management of the co-operatives as well as leadership in the larger society.
3. Women should also be introduced to other fields of work, e.g. potters learning cow pea cultivation, co-operative farmers learning modern poultry keeping, etc. This would provide diversity in their work and improve their chances of earning more income. The conventional skills mostly linked to women's maternal and domestic roles, e.g. nutrition, child care and home management should however not be totally neglected as the elimination of problems in this sector would equally improve their performance in all other sectors.

## **The content of education**

The content of adult educational programmes for the co-operatives must be two-dimensional — the co-operatives as they are formed and the co-operatives as they mature in their economic and social activities.

a) Co-operatives as they are formed: The work of the HIDB (Highlands and Islands Development Board) Field Officers in the formation of the community co-operatives in the Western Isles and assertions made by the Co-operative Officers in the Volta Region reveal that the following should form the subjects of education for the co-operators at this stage.

### **General subjects:**

1. The concept of co-operation;
2. Types of co-operatives;
3. Principles of co-operation;
4. Community Co-operatives;
5. The six principles of community co-operatives;
6. The constitution and bye-laws of a community co-operative.

### **Subjects related to management:**

1. Management Committee or Boards of Directors and their duties;
2. Duties of the Secretary or the Administrative Manager, the Treasurer and other office bearers;
3. Organising and managing meetings;
4. Determining relevant projects for the co-operative;
5. Managing the finance of the co-operative.

b) The co-operatives as they mature in business. At this stage co-operators are expected to gain mastery over their work. The near collapse of the Co-chomunn Na Pairé cooperative in 1987 as a result of inadequate technical knowledge of the fish farming industry on the part of the co-operators vividly illustrates the importance of this point. In view of this, emphasis should be

placed on educational activities directly linked to their fields of economic and social activity.

Examples of such subjects are:

### **General subjects:**

1. The economy in the community;
2. Social life in the community;
3. The community and its needs;
4. The co-operative and community needs.

### ***Western Isles***

(Main economic activities of co-operatives: Fishfarming, distribution of fishermen's and crafter's needs, production and distribution of knitwear, general shop with building materials/grocery, mini-bus service)

### **Subjects related to management:**

1. Developing new markets;
2. Conducting a market survey;
3. Pricing of goods;
4. Arranging the expanding shop; etc.

### **Specific skills:**

1. Techniques of fish farming;
2. Caring for the smolts;
3. Improving sheep's bread; etc.

## **Volta Region**

(Main economic activities of co-operatives: distilling and distribution of local gin, baking and distribution of bread, production and distribution of maize, cassava and some vegetables/pottery wares; beekeeping)

### **Subjects related to management:**

1. Conducting a market survey;
2. Developing new markets;
3. Pricing of goods; etc.

### **Specific skills:**

1. Hazards of the distilling business;
2. Maintaining an acceptable alcohol level;
3. New and improved ways of baking bread;
4. Safer ways of firing pots;
5. Modern techniques in harvesting honey;
6. Safer ways of using chemical fertilizers, herbicides and insecticides; etc.

### **Financing the educational activities**

In recent years education of all types has become an expensive venture. Adult education for the co-operatives therefore requires funds for effective organisation. The Association of Community Enterprises in the Highlands and Islands has so far relied on funds from the local Collaborative Project Scheme of the Scottish Office and the European Social Fund of the European Economic Community.

Some of the co-operatives in the Volta Region have also relied on the initiative and resources of the Institute of Adult Education of the University of Ghana. But as these sources of programme support are not meant to last for ever, there is the need for the co-operative societies to invest some of their profits in an Education Fund in order to ensure continuity in their educational activities.

### **Co-operatives — adult education and development — the unending questions**

It has been found in this study that the only opportunity for the membership of the co-operatives to assess the success or failure of their operations is the Annual General Meeting. Unsatisfactory attendance by the co-operators, especially in the Western Isles, portrays the ineffective use of this medium. Even in the Volta Region where attendance was generally fair, the extent to which members really participated in the deliberations is yet to be assessed. This is because the tendency among members to regard these meetings and others as mere formal occasions for Secretaries or Managers to present statements of accounts without provoking full discussion of their activities is becoming increasingly characteristic of societies of this kind. The question of how to motivate shareholders not only to attend these meetings but also to actively participate in the decisions binding the co-operatives needs to be further probed.

A variety of criteria have been established for determining the nature of a community co-operative. One very important criterion is the involvement of a cross-section of the community in diversifying the activities of the societies. It therefore follows that Adult Educators, Community Development workers and others interested in operationalising the concept of community co-operation would still have to keep their minds open to the issue of how best to whip up community interest, support and total involvement in the development of community co-operatives.

Could community co-operatives provide the means for promoting continuous education of adults in various fields in the community? How best could it serve as a forum for creating awareness among the people of the economic, social and political issues facing the community and how to resolve them?

The promotion of development in rural communities as initially postulated by this study still holds as one of the key objectives of community co-operation. This, admittedly, can only be achieved if co-operators regularly ask themselves:

- What are we doing?
- What social and economic services are we providing or managing?
- Are we making any profit and how are we using it?
- Is our community co-operative a channel for investment in the area?
- How active is the co-operative in the provision of adult education for its members?

etc.

These types of questions provide the basis for the community co-operatives to judge how best they have achieved their goals of serving themselves and their communities. By means of this self evaluation process organisations such as ACE-HI in the Western Isles of Scotland and the co-operative council in the Volta Region of Ghana have been able to ascertain their own effectiveness.

Finally, it must be noted that the construction of schools, hospitals, factories, community centres etc. per se might not ensure success in development in rural communities. Continuing education of the adult population, particularly in groups where common interest is shared — the Community Co-operatives — holds the key to the attainment of greater success.

*The language used in the »developing« world has been under debate for a long time. Critics observe that it more often than not leads to confusion rather than to clarification. This is a reprint from CROSSCURRENTS No. 2, 14 August 1991. It is an independent NGO newspaper for UNCED, Case Postale 50, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland.*

**Edward Goldsmith**

## **The seductive language of development**

The development industry has mastered the techniques of saying much and meaning nothing. Consider the following extract from a 1984 speech by the then assistant director-general for fisheries at the Food and Agriculture Organization:

*»This program is based on an integrated approach to the development of small-scale fisheries and the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of communities, through the active involvement and participation of the fishing villagers in the planning and implementation of management and development activities.«*

To the uninitiated it sounds wonderful. In reality none of it stands up to a critical analysis. It is merely a way of making people believe that the modernisation of fishing is designed to help local fishing communities when, in fact, FAO wants to modernise fishing to create a market for trawlers, radar and sonar equipment, nylon nets and modern warehouses, and, most importantly, for the expertise which FAO must provide to justify its own existence. The effects upon fisherfolk of modernisation are the destruction of their communities, the export of the fish which once fed them, and the over-fishing and eventual exhaustion of their local fish stocks.

The techniques used by the development industry's sophisticated propaganda machine have been analysed by A.F. Robertson. He highlights the language used for selling its policies and stresses that much of its value rests in »its imprecision of meaning«. He points out that the »buzz words« which it uses can be »combined into almost infinite permutations and still 'mean' something«.

Robertson illustrates his point by listing the 56 words which occurred the most frequently in a planner's lexicon. These are arranged in four different columns of 14 words.

One word can be selected at random from each column to compose a four word, typical development phrase. For example, A3, B6, C9 and D12 make »systematically balanced cooperative action«. A12, B9, C6 and D3 constructs another fine sounding phrase, »comprehensively mobilised rural participation«. None of these phrases mean anything, yet they are typical of the seductive language which fills the countless speeches, plans, project proposals and glossy pamphlets of the development industry.

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	
<b>1</b>	Centrally	Motivated	Grass-roots	Involvement	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	Rationally	Positive	Sectoral	Incentive	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b>	Systematically	Structured	Institutional	Participation	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>	Formally	Controlled	Urban	Attack	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b>	Totally	Integrated	Organisational	Process	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b>	Strategically	Balanced	Rural	Package	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	Dynamically	Functional	Growth-oriented	Dialogue	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b>	Democratically	Programmed	Development	Initiative	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>	Situationally	Mobilized	Cooperative	Scheme	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b>	Moderately	Limited	On-Going	Approach	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b>	Intensively	Phased	Technical	Project	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b>	Comprehensively	Delegated	Leadership	Action	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b>	Radically	Maximized	Agrarian	Collaboration	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b>	Optimally	Consistent	Planning	Objective	<b>14</b>

**A**

**B**

**C**

**D**

### Follow-Up

This journal is ready to provide follow-up with respect to articles focussing on conceptual and/or practical orientations and experiences related to adult education and the environment. Please send your materials, manuscripts and suggestions to the editor. For contact use the address on the inside cover.



We would like to inform our readers that the illustrations on page 14, 32, 54, 68, 84, 98, 140, 141, 142, 158, 170 and 178 have been taken from the following very interesting publication: **Klaus Boldt / K. Friedrich Schäde, Das kann doch nicht die Erde sein? Da steht ja noch ein Baum! Verschuldungskrise und Umweltzerstörung in Karikaturen und Zeichnungen aus der Dritten Welt.** Frankfurt 1990.

You can contact the publisher through:

*epd-Entwicklungs politik, Westerbachstr. 33, D-6000 Frankfurt/Main 90.*

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